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CULTURAL HERITAGE AND REVOLUTIONS IN RUSSIA AND NICARAGUA

by

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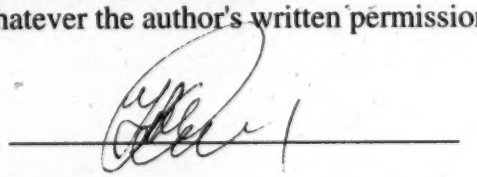

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The undersigned certify that they read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled *Cultural Heritage and Revolutions in Russia and Nicaragua* submitted by Hakopdjanian Gareguin in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts in Russian Literature.

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For my dear sons, Kevin and Sarkis with love

ABSTRACT

The central issues raised in this study are many influences on the culture and poetics of Russia and Nicaragua by the political atmosphere. The aims of this study are to evaluate Russian pre-Revolutionary artistic reality and its development during the next ten years analyzing primarily Alexander Blok's, Valeriy Bryusov's, and Vladimir Mayakovsky's poetry and in Nicaragua primary the literary world of Ernesto Cardenal, Daisy Zamora and Gioconda Belli.

I begin with a discussion of a number of theoretical issues concerning the relation of literature, ideology, and politics in general and their relevance to the structural characteristics of Russian and Nicaraguan development. The complex debate about new art and arts of the past in the modern post - revolutionary society is discussed in the first chapter.

The second chapter traces the symbolism and futurism movements' development in Russia before and after the Socialist Revolution. The political and historical view is given as a background for the next more close analysis of the Russian poetic arena during the Revolution and immediately after.

In the third, chapter I discuss Blok's evolution in his last years, from the extreme positions that he adopted in 1918 to his final recognition of the virtues of the classical concept of art.

In the last chapter, I propose to look at Nicaraguan literature as an ideological practice of national liberation struggle, emerging from a complex set of cultural relations and institutions given by tradition and encoding new forms of personal, national, and popular identity.

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Introduction

This study argues that a Marxist aesthetics is not primarily a theoretical problem but rather one that must be understood as part of the political activity of the Bolshevik Party in a specific historical setting. It therefore challenges the view held by many critics who suggest that Marxism should not be equated with Communism. My analysis is focused on Party practice in literary affairs; I discuss Party intentions and measure Party success. Not only does this study consider the development of the Party's literary activity after the October Revolution in Russia; it also offers an analysis of early Soviet literature and a critical review of Marxist aesthetic theory.

It seems to me perfectly logical and legitimate to examine to Marxism-Leninism to formulate an understanding of artistic reality. One might well ask how the historical Party's involvement with arts and literature should be assessed. This is, of course, a small part of the broader question: What is or should be the relationship of art and politics? For most Western intellectuals art should be apolitical. They view Communism as a form of totalitarianism which smothers artistic expression and retards the progress of culture. Central to this judgement is the belief that for art to flourish the artist must be "free" to follow his creative impulses. They argue that Bolshevik policies reduced art to propaganda and the artist to a political tool.

For Marxists, however, the lesson of the 1920s must be viewed differently. First, the Bolshevik theoreticians think that the belief that art necessarily flourishes under bourgeois liberal democracy must be revised in favor of an understanding that, under capitalism, artistic creation is primarily a commodity controlled by the ruling class for its benefit. Second, for Marxists, art cannot be separated objectively from politics and , therefore, the view that politics intrudes into life and art must be revised; political ideas

and consciousness emerge from the class struggle and can and should be assimilated and expressed by an artist. It should be stated that in literary and cultural affairs there was no central Party leadership based on a clear political analysis before the late twenties and early thirties when Stalinists took over all political control in the Party.

The first section of the chapter traces the development of Marxist - Leninist views on art and literature. The analysis shows that in the post-revolutionary Soviet Russia, the "proletarian phase" in literary affairs was not dominant and a unified policy came later with the creation in 1934 of " the union of Soviet Writers ."

It is a fact that Marxists had no unanimous position regarding the arts. They were unanimous only regarding realism as the unique basis for revolutionary art, condemning all modernist and avant-garde works as exponents of reaction.

The section also deals with various Bolshevik view on art. The second section is dedicated to the artist's place and his role in revolutionary society. Despite the many beliefs presented by Western critics, the evidence clearly shows that Bolshevik never articulated an aesthetic or even a literary "line" at any time throughout the period before Stalin's attainment of power. The chapter provides material supporting the idea that Bolshevik party was interested in a socially conscious art and a politicization of both the art and the artist. The artist's function was the recognition of the class struggle as the central fact of modern life and its reflection in a work of art. There may have been tacit agreement on this point, but such a direct command was never issued. In a certain sense, the notion that the artist must be free to create whatever he wants, with the "democratic" marketplace determining

what will be consumed, was quietly accepted, although the Party did ask for some personal involvement in political activities. The pressure and persecution for non-conformity with 'Party line' as an absolute truth came later.

Blok occupies a special place among the Russian poets the present work discusses. A striking case study of the effects of fundamental changes on an individual poet is the destiny of Alexander Blok. Blok disillusioned with the new society that he had helped to acclaim with *The Twelve* (1918); this is one of the most famous of all poems celebrating the Revolution. After his initial euphoria of 1917, gradually Blok became deeply disillusioned and lost hope that the Revolution would bring the "spirit of music" back into the world.

After discussing 'literature and politics' in the Soviet Russia, I attempt to examine the intellectual sources, and foundations of the Nicaraguan Revolution. The evidence shows that policies and interpretations of the relations between "old" and "new" in Nicaragua were closer to being social democrat than Marxist- Leninist,and the Christian values were predominating in the new Nicaraguan society.

Chapter I Marxist-Leninist View on Art

The view of Marxist position on art is heterogeneous because Marx and Engels made only occasional comments about the subject. They situated art " among 'superstructures' which maintained a 'relative autonomy from the economic base of society, yet where 'in the last instance' determined by it" (Laing vii).

In his Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy, Marx argues about the relationship between art and the society which produced it.

According to him, Greek art could not be produced in the age of steam engines and printing presses, since its basis was "a system of mythology which functioned to dominate nature through the imagination, since it was not possible to do in reality" (Laing 10).

However, Marx did not say how the art should be in 'capitalist' society and artist's relation with the reality. In The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, Marx developed the idea that the history of art moves in parallel with the history of society and its economic basis: 'social existence determines consciousness' (144). Art tends to reach its finest flowering in ages when the dominant class reaches the zenith of its power; conversely, periods of social and economic uncertainty are accompanied by new movements in art. An artist , like any other individual, has the choice of co-operating with the movement of history, or trying to turn the clock back; but, whatever he does, something of the truth of the times will inevitably come through in his work. The example Engels gave was Balzac, who 'ideologically' was reactionary to the point of monarchism, but who yet, as an artist, wrote more wisely than he knew in his faithful depiction of the 'progressive' realities of his time (Marx - Engels 24).

Marx's ideas about "ruling class" and its "ruling ideas" were developed by V.I. Lenin. His views on the role of artistic work within the cultural sphere during the post-revolutionary period had an effect on the work carried out by *Narkompross*, the cultural and educational apparatus headed by Lunacharsky. The most important of Lenin's positions on art was the principle of '*partiynost*'(adherence to Party principles in art), which was first stated in his article *"Party Organization and Party Literature"* ("О партийной организации и о партийной литературе"). The article was written at a moment when the Tsarist government was relaxing its restrictions on the press. Until this point , no paper which was openly tied to a political party allowed to publish legally. In this way, Lenin writes, 'the

question of the party and the non-party press was decided extremely simply and in an extremely false and abnormal way' (Lenin 19).

The important aspect, for Lenin, was that this situation had made it possible for writers with socialist orientation to contribute to the legal press in a totally individualistic and fickle manner. They had drifted into 'bad bourgeois habits'as writers. Now, with relaxed censorship, it was possible to have a press that was 'nine-tenths' a party press.

Lenin goes on to define the 'principle of party literature' that such a press should adopt:

> *It is not simply that, for the socialist proletariat, literature cannot be a means of enriching individuals or group; it cannot, in fact, be an individual undertaking independent of the common cause of the proletariat. Down with non-proletarian writers! Down with literary supermen! Literature must become part of the common cause of the proletariat, a 'cog and screw' of the single great Social Democratic mechanism set in motion by the entire politically-conscious vanguard of the entire working class* (Lenin 19).

Lenin then qualifies this somewhat bald statement by allowing that:

> *In this field greater scope must undoubtedly be allowed for personal initiative, individual inclination, thought and fantasy, form and content. All this is undeniable; but all this simply shows that the literary side of the proletarian party cannot be mechanically identified with its other sides* (Lenin 20).

Some critics see in Lenin's statement not only the need for a certain kind of political commitment on the part of the writer, but also a decisive change in the *relations of literary production*. The integration of writing into the 'mechanism' of the Party, he says, will "cut the ground from under the old semi-Oblomov, semi-shopkeeper Russian principle: the writer does the writing, the reader does the reading" (Lenin 24).

With this arresting phrase, Lenin pinpoints the petty-bourgeois nature of the writer under capitalism: his individualism, which leads to a lack of

responsibility for the character of his readership under the guise of the idea of 'free expression', and the hollowness of that freedom when the writer is bound to his 'bourgeois publisher' and 'bourgeois public, which demands that you provide it with pornography in novels and paintings, and prostitution as a "supplement" to "sacred" scenic art' (Lenin 25).

Because this argument implies a contrasting situation for the writer to that imposed by capitalist society, the application of his argument to art in a post-revolutionary society would seem to be legitimate. And his notion of a literature 'openly linked to the proletariat' looks forward to the concept of 'proletarian literature' and to the 'social command' which was central to the ideas of Mayakovsky and his co-thinkers of the 'LEF'(Left Front of Arts) group in the 1920.

However, it should be taken in consideration the fact that Lenin wrote his article after the 1905 Revolution , and it was directed to 'not creative' writing. ' It was a time when a number of parties existed legally, and he was simply insisting that anybody who wrote for Social Democrat journals must stick to the Party line. He was worried about the lack of Party discipline displayed by what he called 'intellectual supermen', and he demanded that they become 'screws and cogs' in the Social Democrat mechanism. Lenin makes no clear cut distinction between the various kinds of writing. His much quoted statement that 'everyone can write what they like, but every organization including the Party, can expel what they don't like', referred in fact to political writing and party journals. His constant stress on propaganda was indeed a policy to be carried on by his successors, but he never decreed that arts could, or should, be used as a direct instrument of the state, nor did he suggest that people should not have free access to books of literature, learning or information.' 'All the libraries must be open

to the public', he said in 1918. Recognizing the power of art, Lenin thought that it ought to be an art not just for few, but for all. The Party never offered a conscious political program for its large and influential cultural organizations and supporters as it did for those directly involved in Party's work. Lenin's chief concern was always with what could be used in the interests of the Revolution, and the arts generally lay outside this sphere except in so far as some books made useful propaganda. He reprimanded Lunacharsky for not seeing to it that 'busts of Marx and propaganda slogans were displayed in the streets', and spoke of the propaganda value of the cinema and certain authors (Lunacharsky 24).

According to Lenin, it was necessary to assimilate bourgeois culture first and only then attempt to create socialist culture. If some Russian revolutionaries and theorists of culture (Bogdanov and others) considered that the class in power (proletariat) must create a new culture, Lenin, Krupskaya, Bonch - Bruevich and, at some point Lunacharsky, among others believed that socialist culture would be the natural outgrowth of previous cultures. They agreed with Lenin's thought: "Why turn our backs on what is truly beautiful, abandon it as the point of departure for further development solely because it is old?" (Lunacharsky 21).

Another Lenin's remark captured by Clara Zetkin regarding the art: "We are excessive iconoclasts in the matter of painting. We must preserve the beautiful, take it as a model, make it our starting point even though it is old" (Zetkin 28).

In Lenin's opinion, the old art possesses elements which compel us to preserve it, treasure it, make it the starting point for a further development.

"Art belongs to the people, " said Lenin. "It ought to extend with deep roots into the very thick of the broad toiling masses. It ought to be intelligible to these masses and loved by them. And it ought to unify the feeling, thought and will of these masses, elevate them. It ought to arouse and develop artists among them" (Zetkin 29).

But Trotsky and his followers did not put in practice Lenin's behest: "For a start, we should be satisfied with real bourgeois culture; for a start, we should be glad to dispense with the cruder types of the pre-bourgeois culture, i.e., bureaucratic or serf culture, etc" (Lunacharsky 26-7).

Lenin himself had definite likes and dislikes in literature and the arts. He thought Dostoevsky 'supremely bad', mistrusted the 'futurist' poet Mayakovsky, and cut the state subsidy for the Bolshoi Ballet because he considered it a piece of 'pure landlord culture.' His admiration was entirely for the realist school in art and literature, and for books with 'social content'. He devoted relatively little time to literary questions, and never in fact elaborated anything that could amount to an official policy.

It is a fact that not all Marxists shared his vision on art and culture. Russian writers and intelligentsia also presented ideas about the 'validity' of the culture of the past in the new society. The official proletarian and materialist ideology of the new state seemed to coincide with the disaffection with the past and the Utopian hopes for the future current among the artistic *avant - garde*.

'Proletarian writers' and their ideologists such as Bogdanov, Pletnev and others saw the fundamental aim of the cultural revolution as the creation of a 'proletarian culture'. They saw the genuine meaning of culture as a

combination of knowledge and technique in all spheres. 'Culture' was not only the composing of verses and stories, not only the writing of plays and putting them on the stage; it was political, economic and artistic creations. *Proletkult*'s (acronym for *Пролетарская культура*, 'proletarian culture'), task was the creation of a new proletarian class culture.

Lenin opposed this utopian naive conception of the creation of a 'new proletarian culture'. Lenin did not deny the importance of creating an independent proletarian culture. Lenin saw this utopian concept of proletarian culture creation as harmful propaganda. He criticized writers and their ideologists who assumed that proletarian culture could break with the past and turn its back upon the so-called treasures of the old culture. At the third All-Russian Congress of the Communist Youth on October 4, 1920, he devoted some special words to the 'talk about proletarian culture.' "Without a clear understanding that only with an accurate knowledge of the culture created by the whole development of mankind, only by working it over, can we create a proletarian culture - without this understanding we will never fulfill this task" (Lenin 12: 102).

We see that Lenin did not deny the necessity of building a 'proletarian culture,' but he emphasized the fact that it could be constructed only on the basis of the experience of the whole preceding science and technique developed by old bourgeois society.

New Party Trends

Intense conflicts over ideas and approaches are not surprising in the context of a revolution dedicated to transforming the entire realm of thought and beings. However, because socialism was so comprehensive in its goals, yet so fuzzy in its details, it generated a host of interpretations.

After the Bolshevik seizure of power, the official state cultural policies were a model of enlightenment and tolerance, all the more amazing in view of the economic chaos of the times, the life-and -death struggle of the Civil War, and the brutality that was later to characterize Soviet politics in all cultural matters. This brave start seemed to support the Bolsheviks' claim that Communism would inaugurate a Golden Age of culture. As Trotsky wrote on the first page of his Literature and Revolution, the arts were ' the highest test of the vitality and significance of each epoch,' (Trotsky 7) and it appeared as though the Communist were willing to be measured against this test. Lenin's approach can be associated also with Trotsky, Krupskaya and Gor'ky, and the majority of the 'fellow - travelers.' However Bukharin, *Proletkult* and LEF were among them who refused to accept 'old' culture in the new society.

Lunacharsky believed in the special nature of art, and the artist's right to experiment; but as a Marxist he believed that it had a social responsibility.

The *Proletkult* had been established as an autonomous organization within the Commissariat for Enlightenment even before the Bolsheviks took power. It saw itself as the artistic movement corresponding to the historical

period of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat', and argued from this that just as the preceding epoch, 'the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie', had produced a culture oriented towards the bourgeoisie, so the new age should at once set about creating a culture of and for the proletariat. The principal characteristic of *Proletkult* was an intolerance of all culture that was created by previous 'ruling class'. As early as 1917 some members of the *Proletkult* were arguing that 'all the culture of the past might be called bourgeois,' and should be destroyed. A new one should be created (Lunacharsky 167).

The *Proletkult* refused to have any contact with intellectuals of non proletarian origins and totally rejected the art of the past as belonging to bourgeois society. This attitude was attacked by Lenin and Trotsky. Trotsky argued that a proletarian art 'in the incomparably more weighty sense that we speak of bourgeois literature' was not possible, for two reasons:
First, the general cultural level of the class was too low to provide a day-to-day milieu which would supply 'all the inspiration he [the artist] needs while at the same time mastering the procedures of his craft.' Thus the consciously proletarian writer would inevitably be reliant on the same kind of intellectual milieu as the 'fellow-travelers' , the name given by Trotsky to the growing number of artists who had accepted the revolution without becoming communists. Secondly, Trotsky argued that, in theory, the notion of a specific 'proletarian culture' was incorrect. Under socialism, the role of the proletariat was to work towards the classless society, in which it would disappear along with the other classes inherited from capitalism. Only than would a 'new, real culture' develop (Trotsky 219).

Dave Laing in his Marxist Theory of Art writes that at this point Trotsky agreed with Engels that a work's quality does not necessarily depend on its author's consciously held ideology (Laing 27).

According to Trotsky, the 'fellow travelers' could make a contribution to Soviet literature. The *Proletkult*'s and LEF's position and attitude toward the culture of the past was strongly supported by several of the former Futurists, notably Mayakovsky. In several poems of the 191-20, well-known "*To Soon to Start Rejoicing*" ('Радоваться рано',1918) Mayakovsky asked why the revolution was so ruthless with the bourgeois enemy on the battlefield, and so tolerant of it in the cultural sphere; Pushkin and Rastrelli were the cultural equivalents of White officers.

In the name of culture the Revolution seemed ready to accept the whole of the past indiscriminately. Like Blok and Yesenin, Mayakovsky was untroubled by the shelling of St. Basil's Cathedral: higher values were at stake (Mayakovsky 2: 12).

The *Proletkult* emulated these sentiments energetically. Kirillov, in his once famous poem, '*We* ('Мы', 1918), demanded the culture of the past in the name of the still more glorious future. The task of the new age was to produce a culture as soon as possible:

> "Let us set fire to Raphael in the name of our tomorrow, Destroy the museums, trample underfoot the flowers of art" (Kirillov 35).

In the years 1918-20 these attitudes became dominant among the members of the *Proletkult,* and with good reason. They regarded the

revolution as the first stage on the road towards smashing the bourgeois system and inaugurating socialism, and they see no need for acquiring the culture of the bourgeois past. As Bukharin put it:

> *I personally think that to master bourgeois culture as a whole , without destroying it, is as impossible as to master the bourgeois state. The same thing happens with culture as with the state. As an ideological system, it is acquired by the proletariat in a different combination of its constituent parts. Practically speaking , the difference is that if you argue from the standpoint of acquiring it as a whole, you end up with, for example, the old theatres and so on*
>
> (Bukharin 91).

Mayakovsky made the same point even more pertinently:

> *Lunacharsky is Commissar for Enlightenment; but those views which he propagates in the sphere of art are not at all the same ones as he applies in the political sphere, and if he were to apply such views in any other sphere it would somewhat surprise and shock the Central Committee of the Party* (Mayakovsky 12: 251).

For Mayakovsky and his followers, art was an integral part of life, with its own contribution to make to human and social development.

If art was to serve socialism it would have to be brought into closer contact with reality. They rejected the finest achievements of the past, taking up Lenin's suggestion that art might take the place of the church under socialism. Mayakovsky in his '*Order No. 2 to the Army of the Arts* ' ('Приказ № 2 армии искусств, 1921) writes:

Нет дураков,

ждя, что выйдет из уст его,

стоять перед "маэстрами" толпой разинь.

Товарищи,

дайте новое искусство-

такое,

чтобы выволочь республику из грязи.

(Mayakovsky 8 : 148).

(There are no fools today to crowd , open - mouthed, round a "maestro" and await his pronouncement. Comrades, give us a new form of art - an art that will pull the republic out of the mud.)

There was a demand that writers should not confine themselves to a photographic description of the present; instead they should 'draw their poetry from the future'.

One implication of this was frankly propagandist; writers were encouraged to describe not what actually was, but what would assuredly be in the not so distant future. This idea was later taken up by Socialist Realism, with the difference that in the 1930s and after the Party told the writers what the future was going to be. The debate over culture turned eventually into struggle for power. Both the Proletcult and LEF had infringed on the Party monopoly of Marxist doctrine, and were therefore destroyed.

In this transitional period, many of Russian writers and poets despite

Bolshevik criticism in 1920s continued to write objectively, although their critics tried to convince that the extreme individualism, which is one of the characteristics of 'bourgeois decadence' - Symbolism -, shuts artists off from the sources of true inspirations. It sets up a barrier, social events and condemning them to endless confusion over their petty personal experiences and morbid fantasies. The artist in a class society tries to recruit art into serving his purposes. The 'truly' art is social orientated and has a specific function. It must show the world as 'changeable' and it must 'help' to change the world.

With Stalin's "class war on the cultural front," started a cultural revolution in Russia , which involved militant and repressive policies against the bourgeois intelligentsia, spearheaded by the party ostensibly to promote 'proletarian interests.' Lenin's cultural revolution hardly seems to serve as precedent - setting. It was a vast literacy campaign, designed to create a work ethic for the proletariat and a readiness to join cooperatives for the peasantry; it was founded on assimilation of bourgeois culture and cooperation with bourgeois specialists.

What did it have in common with specialist baiting, forced collectivization, and the takeover of important roles in industry, administration, and education by the working class? The parallels between Lenin's position and Stalin's cultural revolution are striking . In particular, the emphasis on the class content of culture, a radical break with the past, and hostility toward the bourgeoisie, all typical of *Proletkult* reverberated in Stalin's class war.

The culture performs an organizational function, from which it can be concluded that literature must serve as an instrument for mobilizing and educating the masses. Hence, just as the peasants were to be collectivized, so the writers and intellectuals in general were to be 'bolshevized', according to the slogan of the day. The strong censorship, criticism and persecution came with the policy of artificially stimulated class-warfare. The main victims in the campaign were the fellow-travelers.

Furthermore, by suppressing *Proletkult*, Lenin set a precedent for party control in cultural affairs.

The cultural revolution was blended with an ideological revolution. Discipline and utopia were combined to create the new Hero of Labor. Finally, proletarian culture was transformed into socialist realism.

Preoccupied with consolidating power, Lenin had little patience for experimental political cultures. At the same time, there was a tendency to proclaim loyalty to revolutionary ideals and to justify various policies on that basis, whether there was an authentic correspondence or not. This aspect of the cultural revolution lent itself to myth-making and a ritualization of radicalism. The working class, glorified as the hero of the new society, was denied any genuine power. In the economy, in the administration, and particularly in the cultural field it had to rely on so -called 'bourgeois specialists' bequeathed from the past. The literary organizations in the first decade of Soviet rule included small groups claiming to be proletarian, various avant-garde cliques such as the Futurists, and fellow-travelers. This

relatively mild, in retrospect almost idyllic, period ended abruptly in 1929, with the end of the New Economic Policy and Stalin's decision to make the Party, now under his undisputed personal control, into an instrument for the revolutionary transformation of society and an apparatus for the minute regulation of all aspects of life.

One of the architects of the new politics in literature and arts, Zhdanov, justified the new situation by invoking the authority of an article by Lenin entitled *"Party Organization and Party Literature."* In using this document as the main authority for the Party's new policy of enforcing total control on the writers and dictating to them in matters of content and form, Zhdanov was certainly resorting to conscious fraud. Zhdanov ignored another passage in Lenin's article which said: "Everybody is free to write and say what he pleases, without the slightest restrictions, but every free association is also free to expel such members who use the party's platform to preach anti-party views. Freedom of speech and freedom of the press must be absolute' (Lenin 26).

As the notes which Lenin made for this article show, he was writing of literature in the most general sense, and primarily had in mind not creative writers but, as he said in one of his notes, such *litterateurs* as Akslrod, Martov, Trotsky and Plekhanov until 1925.

Admittedly, he may not have chosen this course, but his opinion was, rather uncharacteristically, ambivalent in this regard. The following statement attests to an almost contradictory position: " Every artist... has the right to

create freely, to follow his ideal regardless of everything. But then, we are Communists, and ought not to stand idly by and give chaos free rein to develop. We should steer this process according to a worked -out plan and must shape its results" (Zetkin 232).

The new Communist policies that came in the end of the 1920s emphasized the primacy of ideological content. This doctrine in Russia ruled literature with its relation with politics during almost 60 years.

Chapter II Russian Symbolism and Futurism

If the Marxists had mixed feelings about art, the Symbolists, though for different reasons, were even more acutely aware of its paradoxes and ambiguities. They recognized that Western culture seemed to have reached a dead end in the misery and squalor of the modern city, but they proclaimed that art had the power to redeem it yet. They were fascinated by the fragility of art as much as by its enduring vitality, but in their pursuit of this elusive combination they were constantly falling into the traps of excessive refinement or, at the other extreme, of contamination by the gross and temporal realities of this world. At times their awareness of their failures and betrayals, in both life and art , let them to feel that they and the rest of their compromised culture could expect nothing better than total destruction, so that a fresh start could be made. These theme was given its classic formulation in Bryusov's poem 'The Coming Huns' ('Грядущие гунны', July 1905), where the poet seems to welcome and even encourage the barbarians:

Сложите книги кострами,

Пляшите в их радостном свете,

Творите мерзости в храме,-

Вы во всем неповинны, как дети.

А мы мудрецы и поэты,

Хранители тайны и веры,

Унесем зажженные светы

В катакомбы, в пустыни, в пещеры.

И что, под бурей летучей

Под этой грозой разрушений,

Сохранит играющий Случай

Из наших заветных творений ?

Бесследно все сгибнет, быть может,

Что ведомо было одним нам,

Но вас, кто меня уничтожит,

Встречаю приветственным гимном

(Bryusov 1: 433).

(*Pile up your books in pyres, dance in their joyous light, commit your abominations in the temple- you are as innocent as children in all that you do, And we, sages and poets, guardians of the mystery and the fight, we will bear our lighted torches away into the catacombs, the deserts, the caves. And what, beneath this flying tempest, this storm of distraction, what of our treasured creations will be spared by the caprice of Chance? Perhaps everything that was known to us alone will perish without a trace, but you, who come to destroy us, I greet with a hymn of welcome.*) [1]

Not just the theme, but many of the details, the opposition of childlike innocence and senescent culture, the imagery of the 'barbarians' and of 'culture in the catacombs', with its suggestion of the collapse of the Roman Empire, were to recur time and again in the literature of succeeding decades.

But when we look at it more closely, this notorious and influential poem becomes strangely evasive. The poem invites the barbarians to destroy existing culture, while holding out a hope that perhaps 'we' will be able to save something from the wreckage, but then in the next stanza, we are told that if anything does survive it will be do to chance. The clumsy versification of the final stanza adds further to the semantic confusion. If Bryusov's 'hymn of welcome' to the barbarians makes little sense beside his avowed intentions of saving culture from destruction, the over-emphatic accent of 'without trace' at the beginning of the line, and the inept rhyme of 'Perhaps' (*быть может*) with 'annihilate' (*уничтожит)* produce an impression of superficiality and affectation. The simple *dol'nik* rhythm of the poem yields in the final stanza to fluent, regular amphibracs, which reinforce the sense of glibness. Bryusov talks of preparing himself to meet the Huns, but he is obviously confident that he at least will be spared by them.

As has often been pointed out, the poem reflects the mood of shame and catastrophe felt by many Russians at their humiliations by the 'barbarians' in the Russo-Japanese war of 1904 - 5, and their panic at the revolutionary events of 1905. But the significance of this should not be exaggerated. In other poems written at exactly the same time Bryusov

faithfully reflects other moods too; the cycle 'Modernity' ('Современность') in which "The Coming Huns' is included, contains also conventionally patriotic and even jingoistic verse. In context 'The Coming Huns' is an opportunistic poem, on which presents an idea, but it is not really committed to it. However, events had turned out, one could have found a poem in this collection to match the situation.

Bryusov's flirtation with fire and brimstone takes a slightly different direction in his story 'The Last Martyrs' ('Последние мученики', 1906). Here he depicts a group of artists and intellectuals who have taken refuge in a church from an anarchic uprising. The revolutionaries surround the building and tell those inside of the fate awaiting them:

The experience of thousands of years has taught us that there is no place for old spirits in the new life... We shall sever from our body all the dead, all those incapable of resurrection, with the same anguish, and the same ruthlessness with which one amputates a sick limb. Why do you pride yourselves on being poets and thinkers? We are strong enough to create a new line of sages and artists, such as the world has not yet seen, such as you are incapable of envisaging. Only he who is too weak to create is afraid of losing something. We are a creative force. We do not need anything of the old world. We renounce any sort of inheritance, because we shall hammer out our own treasures. We are the future, and you the past, and the present is the sword which you see in our hands (Bryusov 96).

To this the hero retorts:

> Yes, you are barbarians with no ancestors. You despise the culture of the ages because you cannot understand it. You boast of the future, because, spiritually, you are paupers. You are a cannon-ball, which unashamedly smashes the marbles of antiquity (96-97).

The speech is rhetorically effective, but as an argument it does not rise above name - calling. The hero offers no defense of his doomed culture other than its age and continuity, and the intellectuals can find no better way to illustrate their cultural superiority over the barbarians than by abandoning themselves to an orgy of drink and debauchery while they wait for the enemy to break in and destroy them. However, we are not to take this destruction too seriously, because the hero is called Athanatos (Immortal), and it is his narrative, miraculously rescued from the flames, that provides the story and demonstrates the indestructibility of cultural values. Perhaps culture will survive after all, though Brysov gives no reason why it should. He is still not really thinking about the unthinkable, only flirting with it.

The defense of culture in 'The Last Martyrs', unconvincing though it may seem, does, however, mark a change in Bryusov's attitude, and perhaps, a more sincere feeling too. The reason for this probably lies in Bryusov's rejection of the political demands made of art by Lenin in his famous article of 1905, *"On Party Organization and Party Literature"* Bryusov wrote long and cogent attack on it in his 'Freedom of the Word' ('Свобода слова') immediately after its appearance. And so Bryusov's new barbarians are no longer

mysterious foreigners but revolutionaries within the camp. He could not have known of course that the leader of his revolutionaries would anticipate Lenin's contemptuous phrase about ' this or that old building'.

But the idea of the end of culture is implicit in many Symbolist pronouncements in a much deeper sense. The 'art for art's sake' period in Russian Symbolism was short-lived, as the conviction of the superiority of art over life and nature led paradoxically to a moralistic or even missionary sense that if life was so inferior then the artist had a duty to do something about it. The elaborate theoretical superstructure of Russian Symbolism from 1900 onwards was designed to demonstrate the artist's social fiction and necessity.

Either, like Blok, he served as an intermediary between the cosmic powers and this world, decoding, interpreting and even preaching the divine message to humanity; or, like Vyacheslav Ivanov, he saw Symbolism as a potential universal myth which would reunite humanity through a revelation of its common heritage. Both poets could accept only an art that was 'more than art'; 'mere' art was, after all, not enough.

The trouble with this view - a very infectious one, to which almost every critic has succumbed at one time or another- is that if there is something even higher, to which art is only ancillary, then what will happen to art once that higher stage has been reached? Will art still be necessary? At times the Symbolists felt that once it had fulfilled its mission, it would indeed be redundant. Thus Andrey Bely held that:

"Art at it exists in the present world is only a temporary measure.... a tactical device in humanity's struggle with fate.... Thus art will only achieve its true aim when it ceases to exist"

(Elsworth 327).

Thus by a strange paradox the art that is 'more than art' is doomed to do away with art. And it was not just their own work that faced such extinction. The apocalyptic hopes which most of the Symbolists placed in an imminent revolution in human culture and the appearance of a new consciousness assumed the comparative worthlessness of even the best in the culture of the past. What appeal could the fumbling and groupings of their predecessors have for those who had arrived?

By none of the Symbolists were these paradoxes more acutely felt than by Alexandr Blok.

The Futurists

The Symbolists' sense of themselves as the culmination of Western culture could not but make them apprehensive of the future. What did it hold in store for them? a new dawn? or a new dark age? Either prospect seemed to threaten them with oblivion. Meanwhile all the indications appalled them; the apocalyptic hopes of the early Symbolists turned into apocalyptic nightmares.

The sense of a new chaos threatening civilization is conveyed incomparably in Andrey Bely's St. Petersburg; Merazhkovsky entitled his essay on Gor'ky and Chekhov '*The Coming Lout*' ('Грядущий Хам', 1906);

the title probably deliberately recalls the title of Bryusov's poem) and proceeded to argue that even in art the barbarians with no cultural traditions or spiritual values were taking over. The enemy was already within the gates.

Some of the fears of the Symbolists materialized in the Russian Futurist movement. The Futurists answered Merezhkovsky with the insolent rhyming riposte '*Arrived in Person*' ('Пришедший Сам') and they happily accepted the title of 'Huns' (Khlebnikov V : 207).

Their manifesto ' *A Slap in the Face for Public Taste*' ('Пощечина общественному вкусу ', 1912) called for the dumping of the classics of Russian literature, from Pushkin to their contemporaries, from the 'steamship of modernity'.

It was often been pointed out by Renato Poggioli [2] and others that this notorious gesture merely reflects the unthinking subservience of the early Russian Futurists to the Italian Futurists even in their *èpatage*, for if the Italians might seem to have a case with their cultural traditions stretching back over two thousand years, it was absurd for the Russians, who could not quite manage a single century. But the point at issue is not so much the length of the cultural heritage; for , in that case where would one draw the line? A deeper reason lies in the natural instinct of the creative artist, whose relationship to the past contains often enough elements of both reverence and rivalry. He takes what he needs, ideas, images, techniques, from other artists and uses them for his own purposes; what is alien he rejects.

This idea forcefully expressed in Vyacheslav Ivanov's poem ' The Nomads of Beauty' ('Кочевники красоты'), where the creative artist is compared, probably for the first time in Russian literature, to the Huns; he is rootless, a nomad in time, and he ruthlessly plodders and destroys the culture of the past in order that a new beauty may rise the ruins.

Вам - пращуров деревья
И кладбищ теснота!
Нам вольные кочевья
Судила красота.
...
И с вашего раздолья
Низритесь вихрем орд
На нивы подневолья,
Где раб упрягом горд.

Топчи их рай Атилла,-
И новью пустоты
Взойдут твои светила,
Твоих степей цветы !
(Ivanov 91)

(For them the orchards of their ancestors and the confines of their graveyards; to you the Beauty has allotted the freedom of the nomads. ... From your expanses cast yourselves down in a storm of hordes on to the fields of slavery, where the slave rejoices in his harness. Trample their paradise, Atilla, and let new suns , the flowers of your steppes, spring up in the virgin soil of the wilderness.) [3]

The significance of the poem lies not only in the fact that Ivanov was a Symbolist, but that he was a classical scholar steeped in the culture of ancient Greece and Rome; even so, as an artist he was prepared to jettison this heritage. His attitude is startlingly close to that of the revolutionaries in Bryusov's 'The Last Martyrs', and, seen in this light, Athanatos's denunciation of the 'barbarians with no ancestors' looks even less effective. As Zamyatin was to write only a few years later:

> *The glory of a feudal aristocrat may consist in being a link in the longest possible chain of ancestors; but the glory of an aristocrat of the spirit consists in having no ancestors, or in having as few as possible. If an artist is his own ancestor, if he has only descendants, he enters history as a genius; if he has few ancestors, or only a distant relationship to them, he enters history as a talent*
>
> (Zamyatin 139). [4]

The resemblance's between artists and barbarians can indeed be disconcerting.

The Futurist rejection of the cultural past, then, for all its apparent

barbarism , is not so different from the practice of other artists, or societies for that matter. Each generation has its preferences and its blind spots. Every age selects and distorts, rejecting as much in the cultural heritage as it accepts.

The Futurists differed only in being not selective in their rejection but total, and in being more outspoken about it.

Besides the excuse of 'the burden of the cultural heritage' there was another reason too why the Futurists rejected the art of the past. The industrialization and urbanization of the twentieth century had brought unparalleled change to Western life, and as a result man's perceptions and psychological needs had changed too. If the Symbolists had responded to the crisis of their times by appealing to the timeless and spiritual sides of man, the Futurists seized on the physical and temporal aspects, as if to say that , if any progress towards a better humanity were to be made, these realities too would have to be recognized.

Accordingly the Futurists set their aesthetics firmly in their time and place: they were poets of the city not of the countryside; their textures were characterized by harshness and angularity rather than smoothness; they rejected such traditional 'timeless' themes as nature and love in favor of the specifics of one's immediate predicament: ' I know that a nail in my shoe is more nightmarish than Goethe's fantasy', wrote Mayakovsky in *'A cloud in Trousers'* [" Облако в штанах"] (Mayakovsky 1: 183) .

For the same reasons they were keenly interested in the implications of technology for the arts, - in photography, the gramophone, and, above all, the cinema; and they argued their case in deliberately anti-aesthetic terminology: for example, they rejected realism because a camera was more 'economical' of time and labor than a paintbrush. The germs of the post- revolutionary LEF movement can be discerned even at this early stage in the theory of the Russian Futurists.

It was the Great War that finally convinced the Futurists of the rightness of their cause. For here their experiments with language and color had been justified by the fantastic reality of life itself. The Futurists argued that thus were not only more artistic in their approach, but also truer to life. Addressing the academic artists of the time, Mayakovsky wrote in 1914:

> *It was you who walked past the screaming colors of our canvasses and muttered: 'What crazy colors, you can't find anything like them in nature. There everything is calmer. So choose your colors closer to nature.' And now take your gray moldering palettes, good only for painting the portraits of wood lice and snails, and try to paint the red-faced beauty of war, whose eyes are the suns of searchlights, in her clothes as our determination to thrash the Germans.*
>
> *.... You will reply: 'But why should we paint it? We're not fighters at all, we accept war as a necessary evil, it can last at most a year, it's irrelevant, and anyway there are lots of other things to paint.'*
>
> *No; today everything is the war... If you cannot see the victims of*

Kalish in a bright shiny apple, positioned for a still-life, then you are no artist. It is not obligatory to write about *the war, but you must write* of *it*

(Mayakovsky 1: 309). [5]

The art of the Futurists may be grotesque and even fantastic, but it was still arguably a more faithful representation of an extraordinary reality than any conventional techniques could achieve. Modernity of form was always more important than topically of content.

Thus their program at this stage was still primarily aesthetic, not political or social. In another article of this period Mayakovsky begins by lamenting the bombing of Rheims cathedral; but, he goes on to say, the real reason for the destruction of art was not German bombs, but the stick-in -the -mud attitudes of the artists themselves. He then effectively exposed the facelessness and conventionality of even the best writers of the time, when it came to treating a contemporary subject, by combining stanzas from different poets to create a spoof but plausible war poem. And the article ended:

> "As a Russian I revere every effort by our soldiers to seize a piece of enemy territory, but as a man of art, I cannot but feel that possibly the whole war was only though up so that someone could write one decent poem" (1: 304).

The Symbolists' attitude to the futurists is worth a study on its own. They looked with alarm at these barbarians, but they also had a

sneaking suspicion that the barbaric menace they had so often invoked had at last arrived before the gates. In the critical writings of Bryusov and the diaries and notebooks of Blok, the futurists appear as a fearsome and incomprehensible force, the potential harbingers of a revolution in human consciousness. In this as in so many other of their apocalyptic hopes the Symbolists were, however, mistaken.

'*Correspondence from Two Corners*'

A small booklet, Correspondence from Two Corners (Переписка из двух углов) by Vyacheslav Ivanov and Mikhail Gershenzon reflects very well all debates over the culture of the past in Russia. Their arguments against the culture of the past can be reduced to the three main charges: that the sheer historical accumulation of culture had become intolerable for both the intellectual and the artist; that culture had become a means of oppression, both social and psychological; and that it was morally suspect and even dangerous. For these reasons a new and utterly different type of culture was desperately needed. For the Christian it is original sin, for the Marxist the division of labor, for Gershenzon it is the cultural heritage that lies at the root of modern man's disaffection.

Yet these ideas are presented with such wit and subtlety that they are worth summarizing in some details. For, as Gershenzon is well aware, even this wit and subtlety are the products of the culture that he is descrying , and he fully

realizes the frustration of criticizing it by means of a consciousness that has been conditioned by it. For all his hostility to it, he remains, as he readily admits, deeply committed to Western culture and its values, and even his fiercest denunciations are punctuated by avowals of his love and reverence for it. Indeed we may feel that at crucial points in his argument he sometimes pulls his punches. For all that, his case is a powerful one.

> *What happiness it would be to dive into Lethe and wash away the memory of all religious and philosophical systems, of all knowledge, art, and poetry, and emerge on the shore again naked, like the first man, unnumbered and happy, and to stretch out one's bare arms freely to the skies, remembering only one thing from the past - how oppressive and stuffy it had been in those old garments, and how delightful it was without them... Perhaps we had not really found that glorious raiment so oppressive, so long as it was intact and beautiful and hugged our bodies comfortably; but now that in these last years it has been torn and dangles off us in rags, one wants to tear it off and throw it far away*
>
> (Ivanov and Gensherzon 11-12).

Each man, according to them, can recognize something personal and individual in the piece of art. All revolutions against culture have stopped halfway, and have ended by recanonizing it. Only when we have taken it away from the State and returned it to the individual, will culture rediscover its purpose. Ivanov had begun by objecting that art is essentially a liberating

force; so long as it is not imposed dogmatically, but is freely assented to. He now argues that culture is only one aspect of religious values; by itself it is valueless. Culture is a link between generations. He points to the fact that deluges and conflagrations have destroyed culture in the past, only for a new, no less transient, culture to appear in its place. However, it is not the transience that is important, so much as the human determination to rebuild it accordingly to the traditions of the past. To destroy culture and the arts is only to resurrect them in the same old limited and imperfect forms. Ivanov believed that only faith in God's absolutes can restore true culture and true values. He writes:

> "Not a single step up the staircase of spiritual resurrection is possible without a step downwards into the underground treasure house: the higher the branches and deeper the roots" (23).

To destroy culture and the arts is only to resurrect them in the same old limited and imperfect forms. Only faith in God's absolutes can restore true culture and true values.

Gershenzon, of course, cannot accept this argument, because he regards even the transcendental values and spiritual freedom, of which Ivanov speaks, as irremediably compromised by the culture which they claim to transcend.

But there are other weaknesses in Ivanov's position. For if culture is only relative values, and if it necessary rebuilt according to the same

traditions after each round of destruction, it is difficult to see why he should be so concerned to preserve this particular culture. As he says, it is not just the memory of the relics of previous generations, but the memory of the processes by which they achieved their works. If we see culture as 'old' then we are allowing ourselves to forget that each of its achievements was once new. This is the truly liberating inspiration of the past: that art is not static or dead, but a perpetual challenge to become creative ourselves. If we feel ourselves trapped by the culture of the past, it is we who have become weak and weary, and unable to recognize the new. Gershenzon then claims that he did not really advocate total destruction and repeat that it is just the highest achievement of human culture which seems to him to be poisoning the life of men today. It would be very nice of the masterpieces of the past were still living inspirations, but in fact they have turned into mummies and fetishes, that tyrannize our minds and souls.

Finally, Ivanov quotes the example of contemporary revolutionary Russia: surely here was an example of the return to the cultural traditions that seemed to have been superseded?

> ***What is happening at the present moment? The abolition of all cultural values? Or their decomposition, proving their total or partial decease? Or even a revaluation of previous values?***

Undeniably the values of yesterday have been deeply shaken...,
but these anarchic tendencies are not the dominant ones...
What is called the thinking proletariat stands firmly on the
ground of the cultural succession. The struggle is not over
the abolition of these values, but for the restoration of everything
in them which is of objective and eternal significance (34-35) .

This new generation, even in its destruction, still remains within the cultural tradition. And so Ivanov offers the image of the Mother of God, seeing Christ crucified, dead and buried, and risen again on the third day.
For Gershenzon, however, this optimism is quite unfounded. How can one speak of cultural rebirth after the horrors of the Great War and the Revolution? Don't they rather show the bestiality latent within so-called civilized man ? Can one still maintain any belief in the beneficent progress of history ?

As for the Revolution's new -found tolerance for the culture of the past, it is impossible to predict what the proletariat will eventually make of this alien culture. They may see it simply as an instrument of oppression which must be torn out of the oppressor's hands. Even assuming that they can make any use of it, it is unlikely to be our kind of use, or indeed any that we or the proletariat can as yet envisage.

The argument ends unresolved. They simply raise the possibility that all our values are only relative and self-perpetuating, at least until they are shaken or destroyed by some historical catastrophe.

Chapter 3

The necessity of art: the last years of A. Blok

Those who look into the future have no regrets for the past.

– Blok (V: 248)

If the Symbolists often thought of themselves as intermediaries between different levels of existence, each of which had to be experienced to the full , then in their ceaseless shuttling between the extremes of human nature they ran the usual risk of all double agents, that of losing their sense of direction and identity, and finally of being 'turned'. Poison and deviltry became such familiar attributes of art in their work that they gradually lost the ability to distinguish between the inspirations of divine beauty and goodness and the venomous exhalations of Hell , as did Blok for example, in his famous poem 'To the Muse' ('K Muze', 1908). But whereas for some of the Symbolists such paradoxes were little more than an intellectual game, for Blok they expressed in eschatological terms, the central dilemma behind all his work.

Like others before him, Blok realized that the Western orientation of the Russian intelligentsia had alienated them from the vast majority of their fellow-countrymen; but he saw this not just as a regrettable fact of life, but as a moral challenge. The artist's primary duty, he believed, lay with his people, even if this meant opposing those very values of the intelligentsia which had

made him what he was. In this division of the chapter, I shall discuss Blok's evolution in his last years, from the extreme position that he adopted in 1917 and early 1918 to his final recognition of the virtues of the classical concept of art.

The awareness of this dilemma was first aroused in Blok by the 1905 revolution, and it comes to the surface in a group of three works of 1908, all devoted to the same theme: the play The Song of Fate (Песня судьбы), the cycle of five poems *On the Field of Kulikovo* (На поле Куликовом) and the article ' The People and Intelligentsia' ('Народ и интеллигенция'). In each Blok contrasts the tiny handful of Russian intellectuals with the masses of the people. They provided only a thin veneer of Western civilization over the elemental realities that would sooner or later reassert themselves. Blok foresaw a second battle of Kulikovo, in which the Russians would once again throw off a hated foreign yoke; indeed, his later writing often suggest that he found the tyranny of Western culture even more intolerable than that of the Tartar barbarians. Russia must be allowed to discover herself. And so in the play The Song of Fate, an intellectual ("The Man in Spectaeles"), in moment of revelation, says of Faina, the allegorical incarnation of the Russian people:

> *She has brought us a part of the soul of the people. And for this we must prostrate ourselves before her, and not laugh. We writers live the life of intellectuals, while Russia, essentially unchanged, laughs in our faces. These millions are shrouded in darkness; their powers are still dormant, but even now they hate and despise us. They will*

come, and, I know, they will bring new constructive principles with them. Will any trace then remain of us? I do not know. An abyss opens within me as I listen to the songs of Faina. These songs burn out our barren and flabby intellectual souls. As I listen to her voice, I feel how weak and puny my voice is. Perhaps, people with new souls have already arrived, and are hiding somewhere in our midst, only awaiting the signal. They look straight into the face of Faina, when she sings the Song of Fate. Do not listen to the words of her song; listen only to her voice; it sings of our weariness and of the new people, who will succeed us. This is the song of Russia, gentlemen...
(Blok 4: 134 -135).

Throughout Blok's writings on this subject there runs a deep feeling of guilt at the thought of living as an artist at the expense of the people who provided his inspiration. This parasitism could lead to Nemesis, but the fearful welcome that he extended to this prospect is far removed from the paradox-mongering of Bryusov's 'The Coming Huns'. For central to all Blok's thinking is his conviction of the supreme value of art, or at least of artistic inspiration. The value did not lie in the actual 'message' or moral ; the visible, paraphrasable content of a work of art provided only , as it were, the staves, over which hovered the 'music', mysterious, irresistible, and unanalizable (Don't listen to the words of the song; listen only to the voice').

'Music' remained for Blok a symbol of the source of inspiration, an elemental power, the rhythm of history, an image of divine creativity: 'In the beginning was music. Music is the essence of the world. It followed from this that the artist was powerless in the grip of his inspiration ; he could take no part in directing it and could bear no responsibility for the consequences. His justification consisted simply in blinding obeying the prompting of a higher power, working its will through him as merely one of many possible channels.

It followed too that the efforts of the individual artist to do justice to the overwhelming power of his inspiration were pitifully inadequate:

> *In the light of this knowledge the actual works of artists become secondary, since to date they are all imperfect creations, mere fragments of much greater conceptions, reservoirs of music that have managed to incorporate only a tiny part of what was glimpsed in the delirium of the creative consciousness*
>
> (Blok VI: 110).

Even the greatest artist was therefore doomed to fail the power that had chosen him.

Thus the conflict between Blok's view of art as a cosmic force of universal concern, and his simultaneous awareness of the inadequacy and pretentiousness of much of the poetry that he and his fellow-Symbolists were composing led him to veer between hope and despair at ever achieving anything in so compromised a medium:

But I am an intellectual, a writer, and my weapon is the word. I distrust words, but I have to pronounce them. Distrusting all 'literalness', I, nevertheless, look, for a literary answer; all of us share a secret hope that the gulf between words and deeds may not last for ever, that there is a word, which can pass into action

(Blok V: 319).

In the years 1908-16 Blok wrestled despairingly with these dilemmas. The changes in society that he had dreamed of seemed remoter than ever. The Great War had shown the essential barbarism of Western culture, and Russia was yet again following its lead. This sense of guilt and helplessness is reflected in Blok's own work, from 1914 onwards he wrote less and less poetry (thirty seven poems in 1914, ten in 1915, six in 1916, one in 1917). For this reason the revolutions of 1917 bright him renewed hope.

He saw the revolution as a potentially purifying force. The chaos and destruction of the first days of the revolution therefore seemed to him to be only temporary and insignificant side-effects of the colossal process of building a new culture. In the article 'The Intelligentsia and Revolution' (1918), he wrote:

Don't be afraid. Do you think that a single grain of what is truly valuable can be lost? .... Don't be afraid of the destruction of Kremlins, palaces, pictures, books. We must preserve them for the people; but if they are lost the people the people will not lose everything. (Blok VI:16) [6]

It can be seen that the emphasis is placed rather more on the roughness than on the justice. Undoubtedly, Blok did succumb at times to the fascination of violence and destruction. In mitigation it may be said that he was later to discover that these hopes and sacrifices were delusions, and he was to pay for this recognition with his life. Values, even when threatened by corruption, are still better than no values at all. In our time the romantic cult of violence is more fascinating and widespread than it was in 1917. Blok at least had the saving grace of being an unfashionable minority - he knew what he was destroying, even before he had destroyed it.

It may be remembered, too that Blok did not spare himself from his indictment of the Russian bourgeoisie and intelligentsia. In his article 'Russian Dandies' ('Русские денди', 1918) he wrote up a conversation he had have with a young intellectual, Stenich. Stenich had declared:

> *We are all worthless, we are flesh of the flesh, bone of the bone of the bourgeoisie... I am intelligent enough to understand that it can't go on like this, and that the bourgeoisie will be destroyed. but if socialism does materialize, nothing remains for us but to die ; we still have no conception of money; we are all well off and utterly incapable of earning anything by our labor. We are all on drugs and opium; our women are nymphomaniacs. We are a minority, but we are influential among young; we pour scorn of those who are interested in socialism, work and the revolution.*

We live only for poetry; I have not missed a single collection in the last five years...Nothing interests us but poetry. We are empty, utterly empty

(Blok VI : 55-6).

This revelation of the bankruptcy of the aestheticism of the intelligentsia ends with the young man turning on Blok:

"You are to blame that we are like this. You and all you contemporary poets... We asked for bread and you gave us a stone."

Blok ends with the comment: "I didn't know how to defend myself; and I didn't want to; and anyway I couldn't" (Blok VI : 56).

The article raises the dilemma of the artist in its most agonizing form. Is art simply escapism and , in times of crisis, a dangerous luxury? Is the artist responsible for the interpretations of his work and the uses to which it is put? Is art quite inseparable from the society which has produced it, a class with leisure to read and cultivate its good taste, and the comfortable assurance that cultural superiority justifies a superiority in material terms as well? During 1917 and the early part of 1918 Blok was ready to answer 'yes' to all these questions, and one can only admire him for the courage with which he faced them. They form the background to his great poem, *The Twelve*. The immediate inspiration came from the dispersal of the Constituent Assembly by the Bolsheviks on 6 January 1918, and, as Anatoly Yakobson has pointed out , the murder of Snigarev and Kokoshkin in their hospital beds later the

same night. (A. Yakobson, Konets tragadii (New York, 1973, p.89.) The poem celebrates the destruction and desecration of the hopes and ideals of the Russian intelligentsia over the previous century, and finally, on top of everything else, introduces the figure of Christ at the head of the Red Guards. In the last nine lines the violence and cacophony of all that has gone before suddenly yield to more conventionally 'beautiful' imagery and mellifluous rhymes and rhythms. The image seems to be alarmingly like that of 'Gentle Jesus , meek and mild', but the context is now the Day of Judgment.

In the reunion of these two seemingly contradictory images lies much of the power of the poem, but it also raises unanswerable questions. Who is this Christ? He is 'ahead' of the Red Guards, but how far is He identified with them here and now, and how far does He stand for the new age, as yet out of sight? Do the Red Guards recognize or accept Him as their leader? - after all they shoot at him. Is He the old Christ or a new one?

The questions are unanswerable because Blok himself did not know the answers and his own complex and changing attitudes to the poem would make a study in themselves.

In the usual interpretation of the poem the figure of Christ stands for the new culture that will spring out of the ruins of the old - indeed the suddenness of His appearance suggests that is has already arrived - as Christianity had emerged from the collapse of the Roman Empire (Blok himself seemed to sanction this interpretation in a group of articles beginning

with 'Catiline', 'Каталина', 1918). But it is disturbing that the only image Blok can find for the new age is the central image of the culture that he saw and heard crashing in ruins around him.

Evidently, there were times when Blok rebelled against this image as too weak and gentle an ideal to stand at the head of the revolution. As he wrote in his diary for 10 March 1918: 'I myself sometimes hate this effeminate apparition' (Blok VII : 330).

Perhaps, even in January 1918, Blok was afraid that the revolution had not gone far enough and was threatened by the few old values that it still seemed to retain. Yet, even as one argues this case, one is aware of the extraordinary blessing that Christ seems to confer on the Bolsheviks - the surface meaning of the poem is undeniable too. The two attitudes combined form the culmination of Blok's conflicting attitudes to the culture of the past. Many of Blok's own later writings are, directly, or indirectly, concerned with understanding his own poem.

These conflicting possibilities in the figure of Christ explain how it was that Blok could be both assured of the irresistible advance of a new historical era, and also alarmed by the dangers of the revolution being sucked back into the evils of the recorded without comment the prophecy of A.G. Gornfel'd:

'The Bolsheviks are creating a huge class of petty bourgeoisie, with all its typical tendency to rapacity etc' (Blok, *Zapisnyie knizhki* : 390).

The article 'Fellowcitizens' ('Сограждане', April 1918), sums up his horror at the reappearance of bourgeois tastes. What was alarming was not just the reappearance of the old bourgeoisie, but the fact that the workers and the peasants were aping the same contemptible airs. The new age that seemed to have dawned in January 1918, no longer seemed so imminent. Without retracting a single word of *The Twelve*, Blok now began to look at it rather differently.

In his article 'Cataline', written in May 1918, Blok recounts the history of the famous Cataline conspiracy and then moves on to the theory that Catullus in his ode 'Attis' was somehow referring to this failure. The interrelation of the poetic inspiration and social revolution deliberately recalls the creation of *The Twelve*, but the real significance of the article lies in Blok's reinterpretation of its central symbol. In *The Twelve* Christ had placed Himself at the head of the twelve Red soldiers, but the Catiline conspiracy is not directly linked to the coming of Christ; it is merely symptomatic of the greater revolution already imminent. Even though as a revolutionary Catiline might have failed, he had hammered the first nail into the coffin of

> *the 'great culture' which had given birth to and was still to give birth to so many treasures, but which in a few decades was to hear a final and everlasting sentence in a different court, a court that was no respected of persons, the court of Jesus Christ*
> (Blok VI : 73).

Thus the once short distance between the Red Guards and Christ has lengthened to an indeterminate number of years and even decades. This did not alter the significance of the revolution one whit: when Christ was born the final fall of the Roman Empire was still centuries away, but the crucial event by which the new era would date its calendar, had already occurred, hardly noticed or appreciated by the outside world. It meant simply that the

The Bolshevik revolution was not, after all, the last word; it was just the beginning of the end. The final outcome was as unforeseeable as the triumph of Christianity had been (Blok VI : 73).[7]

A rather more elaborate version of the same argument was to be developed in 'The Collapse of Humanism' ('Крушение гуманизма', March-April 1919). Here Blok tried to show that, just like Roman Empire in the fifth century A.D. , so European civilization had overreached itself and lost its roots. Western culture since the Renaissance had been built on the 'rediscovery of classical civilization, by which the mass of the people had never been touched, indeed they were the same people as the barbarian masses that had finally swamped that civilization and wiped the Roman Empire off the face of the earth' (Blok VI: 98).

It followed that the same fate now awaited the West. Russia's role, then, as in the days of the Scythians and the Huns, was to revivify the world with a new, even if seemingly barbaric, culture. Just because she was so backward and had been spared the corruption and decay of the West, she was

closer to the elemental essence of culture, and so better placed to set the world straight again:

> *In Russia was raised the (for a European) indiscreet question: 'which was better, boots or Shakespeare?'; and in Russia discussions long forgotten in Europe often raged over the function of art, discussions, which I would call truly cultured, even though in their primitive naivetè they were all too alien to the spirit of 'civilization'*
>
> (Blok VI: 110)

Because the elements were now expressing themselves through the masses, the old bourgeois intelligentsia was incapable of recognizing or protecting the new face of culture. It was no paradox then to call the barbarian masses its true guardians:

> *If we are to talk of bringing the masses to culture then it is by no means certain who has the greater right to bring whom: the civilized - the barbarians, or* vice versa, *since the civilized are now exhausted, and have lost their cultural value; at such a time the unconscious guardians of culture are the young and fresh barbarian masses* (Blok VI : 99).

This culture is not to be mocked; it is alarming and possibly even fatal for those who have been nourished by the old world:

> *This music is a wild chorus, a formless howl to the civilized ear. It is almost unbearable for many of us, and today it will not seem funny if I say that for many of us it will be fatal. It is ruinous for*

those achievements of civilization which had seemed unassailable; it is totally opposed to our familiar melodies of 'the true, the good and the beautiful'; it is utterly hostile to much that has been instilled in us by our upbringing and education in the Europe of the last century

(Blok VI: 112).

The Russian intelligentsia was therefore caught in a terrible dilemma: as humanists they could never accept it they would find themselves cut off from all culture, both of the past and the future. The clock could not be put back, and if Europe would not recognize these truths then she would have to be forced to recognize them. In fact, by the time that Blok came to write 'The Collapse of Humanism' his thoughts had already begun to take a new turn.

His earlier fascination with violence 'in the name of higher values' was wearing off in the face of the nihilism that he saw around him:

"Life is becoming monstrous, hideous, senseless, Robberies everywhere. The Mendeleyev flat with its *peredvizhnik* archive is in danger of being lost"

(Blok. *Zapisnyie knizhki* : 441).

The touchstone for judging the new order was still art, and he was coming increasingly to realize that its own poetry and inspiration were of no interest or use to it. He recorded laconically in his diary the verdict of a publisher's reader: "My verse is of no use to the workers"

(Blok. *Zapisnyie knizhki* : 234).

On 6 January 1919 Ionov, the notoriously insensitive chief editor of the State Publishing House (Госиздат) rang up Blok to discuss the possibility of bringing out a new edition of *The Twelve*. Blok asked Ionov ironically if he didn't think the poem was a bit out-of -date by now. Ion willingly agreed:

> "Absolutely true. One comrade has already made this point, but we have decided to publish the best works of Russian literature, even if they have only a historical significance" (Blok VII : 351).

Reflecting on this barbarism from a cultural representative of the new government, Blok went on to raise profound moral questions about the future of art under such circumstances. Again the guilt that he felt as a privileged intellectual is in evidence, but it is no longer allowed to dictate a total rejection of culture. This long passage deserves to be quoted in full, because its range of reference, from general questions about the practical needs of culture to its unassailable value, from the guilt, both social and moral, of the individual artist to the understandable but empty distrust and hatred felt for him by the masses, shows clearly that for Blok art stood in the center; all questions come from and ultimately return to the problem of art. Although his conclusions are pessimistic and still overshadowed by his sense of guilt and his acceptance of contempt and hatred as just retribution, this is now seen as a historical tragedy, which will eventually be righted. The value of art still remains whatever the crimes of individual artists.

Of crucial importance in the evolution of Blok's outlook was his appointment to the Repertory Section of the Theater Department of the Ministry for Enlightenment, and later to the directorship of the Grand Dramatic Theater (Большой драматический театр). Unable to write more than a handful of poems during these last years, he found his main purpose in life in recreating on stage the great dramatic masterpieces of the world.

It was not just a personal satisfaction that he drew from this work; he felt that he was playing a vital role in preparing the masses to create their own culture. It is revealing, then, that, despite all the theoretical reservations he had recently been expressing about the moral ambiguity of art, he turned instinctively to the established classics of the Western theatre. He deliberately avoided topicality of subject-matter and modernistic productions, arguing that his chief obligation was to keep the old culture alive so that the future could see it as it was, and make its choice accordingly. It was typical of him not to make any utilitarian or educative claims for his work; art for Blok was an absolute value, in whose light other values should be judged. But, aware of the possible distortions and limitations imposed by their common bourgeois upbringing, he warned his actors and producers against any 'interpretation' with its risks of oversimplification and didacticism:

> *We must not impose anything of our own; we must not preach; we must not take the stage with any feeling of superiority or*

condescension; we must lovingly put into the workers' hands everything - without any exception - that we know, love and understand. Ours is not to select, but to indicate. We are not shepherds and the people are not sheep. We are only better informed, and the final choice does not remain with us (Blok VI : 292-3).

Blok was confident that, freely entrusted with this task, the people would, admittedly, probably only after many generations, rise to the challenge, and that:

even the mist complex of the thoughts uttered by culture would sooner or later be taken up by the whole world, the whole people, and would bring an unexpectedly rich harvest; even the tenderest flower of art would not wilt as it passed from the hands of a thousand into the hands of tens of thousands (Blok VI : 294).

Accordingly he was not prepared to compromise on artistic standards in the hope of making things easier for his audience. The power of art must not be diluted - such dilution had indeed been one of the crimes of the bourgeoisie - for only so could art be recognized for what it was. In time the discredited bourgeoisie would have their places taken by a new class of people, spiritually starved, but attentive and sensitive.

Events seemed to justify Blok's optimism. After only a few productions, on 21 March 1919, he told his company proudly:

Just how directly and powerfully art can act when it is unshackled we can see even today, for example, in some works of the Proletcul't or at theater productions, where a mass of new people with unprecedented eagerness and profound attention listen to torrents of speeches that are totally imbued with sheer art and create a truly aesthetic impulse (Blok VI: 465).

And the following year he was able to declare: "There was something that attracted a new kind of spectator into our theater, there was something that he liked. And that this was a new kind of spectator, we have all seen with own eyes" (Blok VI : 391).

Encouraged by this success, he advocated publishing the classics of world literature in cheap mass editions, and he opposed the move to supply them with ideologically slanted introductions. He felt that there was a vast unsatisfied demand that was not being met, and that people were being fobbed off with junk from the private printing - houses or crude propaganda from the official ones. Blok had of course already raised this problem in his reflections on Ionov, but he now answered his doubts with a new confidence:

I have heard various weighty opinions from Communists to the effect that ultimately the classics cannot create the intensity of life which is required at the present exceptional moment of history. My reply is : agreed, possibly, they can't, but firstly, you can't just assume this a priori, you can't just bury the art of twenty -five centuries in the ground at a time when only a tiny handful of people have experienced

the effect of its poisons, both medicinal and harmful... Secondly, our moment in history is genuinely exceptional and there will indeed be a re-examination of the art of these twenty-five centuries, but it will not be carried out by our Communist comrades alone. Thirdly, there just is o art, other than the art of these twenty-five centuries, 'classical' art in the broad sense, and so inevitably it alone, in all its innumerable reifications will have to face the judgment of history... The theater will either flourish again or choke; but the deciding voice in the struggle between the iron forms of the old art and the spring shoots of the new, as yet unborn - does not and cannot belong to us (Blok VI : 298-99).

But with the deepening of social chaos all around Blok began to lose his confidence in the unaided triumph of culture. He was appalled by the continuing illiteracy of new prose and poetry; there seemed to be no sign of the cultural rebirth of which he had dreamed: "One begins to be terrified for culture - is it really irreparable, is it really buried under the ruins of civilization?" (Blok VI: 125)

Everywhere he seemed to see not the creation of a culture, but its extinction:

Everything is even filthier than it was last year. Everywhere there are signs of filth, deliberate or otherwise...Nobody is willing to do anything. In the old days millions of them had worked for a few thousand.

That's the explanation. Why should these millions want to work? And how are they ever going to understand Communism as anything but robbery and gambling?'

(Blok VII : 366-7).

If Blok still seems to be finding excuses for the proletariat here, there are not comforting ones; there is no prospect now of culture, new or old, ever coming to the masses. And at the end of 1919 Blok wrote: "A symbolic act; on the Soviet New Year's Eve I broke up Mendeleyev's old desk"

(Blok. *Zapisnyie knizhki*: 484).

In the struggle for protect culture against the onslaught of barbarism Blok now felt that his theater stood in the front line. He no longer argued that his role went no further than presenting plays for the proletariat to take its pick of; instead, he declared that his theater should be a 'leader' (Blok VI: 352) .

He was no longer so sure that the masses could be trusted to recognize true art, and so he began to adopt utilitarian arguments and to emphasize the 'relevance' of a particular play to the present:

We need to present these plays in such a way that the public should recognize something familiar, the grandeur of the age, of which, for better or for worse, we are fated to be witnesses; so that the audience should realize that the people of the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries play their part in the events of 1919, and that this not a mechanical

repetition of history, but a new attempt to grasp and make sense of our own time (Blok VI: 354).

In introducing a new series of plays, 'Historical Tableaux', Blok explained that its primary function was educative. His earlier uncertainty (in 'The Collapse of Humanism') as to who had the greater right to bring whom to culture, the civilized the barbarians, or vice versa, was now resolved once and for all. It was clearly the educated classes who were able to give a lead, and the illiterates, who, for all their distrust of any kind of education imposed from above, would have to be brought to culture; the advantage of the theater was that it offered a comparatively painless way of achieving it. By a drastic shift in his thinking culture and the 'elements' were no longer identified, but seen actually as hostile to one another:

> *...the whole series must illustrate the struggle of two principles: culture and the elements in all their possible manifestations. the 'elements' are to be understood both in the sense of nature and in the sense of unbridled human nature. the concept of the 'elements' includes similarly backward, unyielding matter, earthquake, revolution, and possibly too the backwardness and indifference of man'* (Blok VI : 425-5).

This new position represents a complete break with the romantic assumptions that had governed Blok's thinking at least since 1908, and opens the way for his final rediscovery of classical values. the earlier Apocalyptic interpretation of the revolution as 'the end of the historical process' is

abandoned once and for all. At first Blok tried to replace it with a cyclic conception of history, as in the prose foreword of July 1919 to Retribution ('Возмездие'), which 'arose under the pressure of my constantly growing hatred for the various theories of progress' (Blok III : 298). At the end of September in a speech to his theater company he said:

> *You know that the decline of the initial impulse, the ebbing of spiritual and physical power is our earthly lot, the most painful of the evils which we have to bear. So too the tide of the elements ebbs and the movement of the revolution exhausts itself... The cultural impulse declines too... but a decline will be followed by a new rebirth. the great French revolution will be followed by 1830, 1848, 1870, 1917. This new element will awaken again in Europe* (Blok VI : 366).

It was not easy for him to accept the idea of cyclist; one of his most desperate poems, 'Night, a street, a lamp, akhemist's' (Ночь, улица, фонарь, аптека) had been devoted to a nightmarish vision of just such a universe. By temperament he was one of those who looked for a direction and purpose to history. So he tried to believe that a way out of this cycle would eventually appear:' One day man will learn, and the crowd will learn too (Blok VI : 367).

But until that happy day the example of classical art provided a lifeline; art was no longer for Blok a breath of the elemental powers of the cosmos but something quite opposed to them, even a talisman against them. Its medicinal qualities now outweighed its poisons. There is in the great works of the past, even the distant past, a characteristic, imperishable intoxication, a joy which is generously spilled over anyone who approaches them with an open heart; the ideas and the situations may be different from ours; but in every great work the main thing is something which has no name, which defies explanation or analysis... It was this creative spirit of Shakespeare and Schiller which helped us all in 1919 because we believed in its absolute and continuing vitality. But it is not easy to believe even in this in such times as ours when the lives of men are broken from top to bottom, when at times it seems that nothing has the right to survive from the old world. In order to believe in the creative spirit of great works one must be infected by this spirit and experience its timeless power on oneself (Blok VI : 391-2).

Blok had turned his back on his earlier conceptions of the pitiful inadequacy of actual works of art beside the overwhelming experience of artistic inspiration; it was now the artists and their works who defined for him the nature and the mystery of art.

At the jubilee celebrations for Mikhail Kuzmin on 29 September 1920 Blok said:

In your person we hope to preserve - not civilization, which has never yet exist - but something of Russia which has existed, still does exist and will continue to exist. The most miraculous thing is that much which seems to us unassailable will pass, while rhythms will never pass; they are as fluid as time itself, and unchanging in their fluidity... We all know how difficult art is, we know how capricious the soul of the artist is. And with all our hearts we pray that eventually a milieu may be created where the artist can be as capricious as he needs, where he can remain himself without becoming a civil servant or a committee- man or an academic. We all know that this is essential if the artist is to leave behind a legacy as essential to men as bread, even though today they naggingly insist on 'utility' from marble, and scratch their ephemeral words on the same marble, only to understand tomorrow that this marble is good'
(Blok VI: 440).

It is just the individuality and caprice of a work of art that constitute its value. The grandiose claims for the social, revolutionary and cosmic significance of art have dropped away; the elements have disappeared; only art remains. The cult of the 'wild and formless howl' of the barbarians has been replaced by the classical virtues of restraint, balance and harmony. Fittingly enough Blok"s last public speech was devoted to the one figure in Russian culture who embodies just these virtues, Pushkin:

[The poet] *writes in verse, that is, he brings words and sounds into harmony, because he is a child of harmony, a poet. What is harmony? Harmony is the agreement of universal forces, the order of the life of the universe. Order is cosmos, in contrast to disorder - chaos...Chaos is the primordial, elemental, formless; cosmos is ordered harmony, culture; harmony, culture; harmony is created out of chaos*

(Blok VI: 161).

In his last poem 'To the Pushkin House' ('Пушкинскому дому', February 1921), Blok himself managed to demonstrate just these virtues. It is a marvelous, apparently totally un -Blokian poem, light and dancing with a wry but not ironic smile. It is the only one of Blok's poems which evokes the classical past. It is the exemplification of his belated discovery of the culture of the past.

Thus to reprove Blok, as Mayakovsky did in his 'Alexander Blok is dead' and later in his Good! (Хорошо!, 1927), for accepting the revolution only with a large 'yes, but...' is to oversimplify the tragedy of Blok's last years. He began by welcoming the destruction of the past almost as wholeheartedly as Mayakovsky, and only gradually withdrew from this position under the pressure of events and the inspiration of his work in the theater. Marxists may well regard Blok as an example of the kind of liberal intellectual who loses his nerve when the going gets rough. I think that a reading of Blok's works shows that he did not lose his nerve; it was far

harder for him to abandon his earlier conceptions than to stick with them. As he came to see that the last years of his life had been spent chasing up a blind alley, he had the courage to re-examine all his previous assumptions. It was not easy.

> *In order to destroy something on a site which is to be reoccupied, you must have something ready to reoccupy it with. - In order to combine disparate elements together in one place you must ensure that the place is fit for their combination . In order to do anything, you must know how. - To force someone to do something which he does not know how to do is useless and even harmful. In order to write in a given language, you must know that language, or at least be literate in it. If you waste the time and energy of a man on trivia, you should not expect him to contrive to expend the same time and energy on more serious matters* (Blok VII :404).

Elementary truths, but the truth of every one of them had been questioned by Blok in 1917, and had been revised in the light of hard experience. They are not to be read so much as criticism of official vandalism, or even of the barbarism of the masses, but as directed primarily at Blok himself. But by the time Blok had come to the recognition of these truths it was too late to go back.:

> *Life has changed (it is changed, but it is not a new life, not a nuova vita); the louse has conquered the whole world, that's an accomplished fact, and everything can change now only in a direction contrary to the one which we have loved and lived by* (Blok VI: 415-6).

Chapter four
Nicaraguan Revolution and Poetry

By way of comparison we turn now to look at cultural development in Central American Nicaragua where the Sandinist Revolution also raised problems with the culture of the past.

Culture is one of the indispensable ways of understanding the world and ourselves. Culture has always been regarded as one of the supreme concerns of man, chiefly because of the importance of its function in enabling us to know who we are and what we are. This view of culture in Nicaragua before the revolution was in jeopardy. For many Sandinist intellectuals, the dominant class had no program to offer for the welfare of the general populace. They saw the revolutionary class in Russia, Cuba and China in possession of such a program. They saw that Marxism as a revolutionary philosophy designed among other things to conserve, transform and recreate the intellectual and cultural heritage. It proposes to rebuild social institutions in order to salvage and eventually to enrich the tradition by taking it as the starting point of a new humanist culture that will transcend the old because of new sources of strength provided by the socialist organization of society (Rosset and Vandermeer 138-208).

The Sandinist Front proved capable of imposing its own solution to the crisis of the system: not the replacement of one bourgeois faction by another at the helm of the state, but the total destruction of the state apparatus built under the dictatorship; not the rationalization of bourgeois class power in the framework of a liberal economy, but the construction of a revolutionary democracy bent on a transition to socialism.

The FSLN leadership had learnt from the Cuban, Chinese, and Vietnamese experiences that the socialist revolution can triumph in the Third World country only if it mobilizes the nationalist sentiments of the masses, as well as their ideals of liberty and equality. In declaring itself the inheritor and follower of Sandino's epic struggle, the FSLN rooted itself in a living Nicaraguan tradition, emerging as the domination of the country by the United States and its local agents. [8] Initially it displayed great autonomy vis -a-vis the Soviet bureaucracy, which gave no support to the Sandinistas, deeming them 'leftist adventurers' playing into the hands of the dictatorship. Basically, the Kremlin had no intention of provoking Washington in its vital sphere of interest at a time when tensions were arising at a number of points in Africa and Asia.

This was not the attitude of Havana. Close relations had long existed between the Cuban Communist Party and the FSLN. Cuba personified for the Sandinists what Soviet Russia represented for Communists of the twenties. Unlike the Soviet Union, the Cuban leadership firmly supported the Nicaraguan revolution. Behind Cuba was the USSR with its enormous power. This political allegiance, however, in no way involved unconditional subordination. A genuine conquest won through its own power, the Sandinista revolution enjoyed and seemed intent on preserving a real autonomy, even from Havana. Cuba stood as a loyal and experienced ally, providing a source of inspiration in all fields, including those in which Nicaragua could learn from its mistakes.

Although the ideological fight in Nicaragua did not suppress the freedom of the press, a conviction gradually developed among some Nicaraguan artists that the artist must join the political battle on the side of the workers or has to abandon the country. The problems with which the

young Sandinist regime had to contend were indeed immense, and while the government was still struggling to establish itself all over the country, the arts were more or less left to go their own way. The Sandinist leadership had passed a number of laws and decrees that tend to curb freedom of expression. A real pluralism of information predominated in Nicaragua during practically all the years of Sandinist rule. Every day, Nicaraguan citizens could read three different versions and analyses of major events, and polemic between the three editorial boards.

Eight political parties, five labor federations, and six employers' organizations were represented on the Council of State, and unlike their hapless counterparts in Eastern Europe, they did not confine themselves to the role of mere extras. Each one had a headquarters of its own, held cadre schools, printed its own propaganda material, put forward draft legislation, and organized mass demonstrations or even national rallies.

Revolution changed the social structure of Nicaragua. Most of the upper class and many of the middle and professional classes left the country. The Nicaraguan Sandinist Revolution had also had a great effect on national cultural life. On the cultural front a vigorous campaign against illiteracy had brought a new mass readership. New writers had emerged to provide material for this readership. They were encouraged to write, their books were published, and the received the prizes from the *Nueva Nicaragua*, which acts as a cultural clearing- house. Production of books had increased enormously , and there were available cheap editions of many local, Russian and Latin -American writers. In 1981 in a speech to intellectuals published in the daily newspaper *Barricada*, D. Ortega, former President and leader of the FSLN, guaranteed freedom of literary expressions, declaring, 'if you

serve to the Revolution, the Revolution gives you everything', a guarantee that was repeated by other leading intellectuals and which allowed a remarkable variety of styles. Unlike writing during the Stalinist period, realism had not been the only permitted style. A fantasy, a collection of stories on sexual liberation by G. Belli, mystic and religious poems by E. Cardenal, black humor by R. Murillo -all these were common. In poetry, there was a tendency to turn towards the colloquial poem after the first years of heroic revolutionary poetry. Many authors started to use 'simple, everyday words'. There was an attempt to bridge the gap between the intellectual and common man by using simple language and colloquial expressions.

The transitional period had changed life in Nicaragua dramatically. What is or should be the relationship of art to politics during the transitional period from the 'old' to the 'new' society? For many Western critics and intellectuals art is and should be apolitical. They view both Communism in Russia and Sandinism in Nicaragua as forms of totalitarianism which smother artistic expression and retard the progress of culture. Central to this judgment is the belief that for art to flourish the artist must be "free" to follow his creative impulses. From the Communist point of view, the historical lesson of 1917 and the late 70s in Nicaragua must be viewed differently. First, the belief that art necessarily flourishes under bourgeois liberal democracy must be revised in favor of an understanding that under capitalism artistic creations are primarily commodities controlled by a ruling class for its benefit. This thesis is as obvious in the case of Russia as in the case of Nicaragua. Second, for Marxists, art cannot be separated objectively from politics; political ideas and political consciousness emerge from the class struggle and can and should be assimilated and expressed by artists. When

we think of the state control of the arts in a totalitarian, Communist regime, we tend to assume that this means a detailed, all-embracing code, with doctrinal foundations firmly and explicitly rooted in the writings of Marx and Lenin. We can trace it in Marx's Property and Alienation, and Lenin's Proletarian Culture and Proletarian Art among many others.

The Communist party of Russia gradually developed a fully conscious political program for art. However, the *Frente Sandinista de la Liberaciòn Nacional* did not develop the full intrusion of politics into literature because of the lack of time. The situation was quite contradictory. The young Nicaraguan Revolution needed control over all ideological and political theories. That is why hundreds of translations of Soviet political ideologists invaded the country. However, the final goal for Sandinists was not the introduction and imitation of the Soviet model in Nicaragua. But real life made many corrections. The political situation of the country, surrounded by "Contras" and under pressure from the USA, was very difficult and the only solution was to find a force, a counterweight to ensure their survival.

What was the actual *Frente Sandinista de la Liberaciòn Nacional* [FSLN] plan or program for culture in general and literature in particular? It is possible that at the beginning there was no plan. On the one hand, in spite of current belief to the contrary, the evidence clearly shows that the Sandinist Party never articulated an aesthetic or even a literary *line* at the time after the Revolution. But, on the other hand, it is true that the *Frente* was interested in a socially conscious art and in politicizing of both the art and the artist. For example, the *Frente* offered each week at the height of its influence on cultural affairs a cultural supplement in the newspaper

Barricada and some magazines devoted to culture. But the central point remains clear. The *Frente* never offered a conscious political program for its large and influential cultural organizations and supporters as it did for those directly involved in trade union work, and social reform. The direction of cultural work was often set by the personal preferences of the *Frente*'s literary and cultural experts. No formulas were offered, rather the view was expressed that the writer should ally himself with the working class and recognize the class struggle and Yankee "dirty" politics. There may have been tacit agreement on this point, but such a direct command was never issued. In a sense, the notion that the artist must be free to create whatever he wants with the "democratic" marketplace determining what will be consumed was quietly accepted, although the *Frente* did ask for some personal involvement in political activities. That was the case of Sergio Ramírez (the country's vice-president) and Ernesto Cardenal (the Minister of Culture.) Since most writers, poets and other artists had looked forward for many years to the Revolution, the event was welcomed by many of them as the fulfillment of their hopes and dreams.

In this era of heightened social consciousness increasing numbers of intellectuals and writers became self-proclaimed Sandinists. (The same development took place in post - October Russia where many writers and artists became Marxists, some even joined the Bolshevik Party.) But the *Frente*'s approach to intellectuals and cultural workers was quite different from Russia's where the slogan " who is not with us is against us" became the political reality. The *Frente* never considered literary and artistic intellectuals as crucial to the success of the Sandinist Revolution. While the Bolshevik Party began its offensive by targeting intellectuals who had to

join the "building of communism" or leave the country, the FSLN saw its intellectuals as middle class petty- bourgeois allies.

During the late 80s the FSLN created a category of "people's culture". The *Frente* came to accept the notion that there was such a thing as people's democratic culture; it actually sought to create such a culture as part of the struggle. However, cultural matters were not the Frente's priority in a period when it was still numerically weak and bent above all on maintaining its hegemony as the "vanguard of the Revolution'. At that time in fact the Frente modestly contented itself with securing in all fields what it called the 'commanding positions'. It did not yet dispose of cadres sufficiently strong, loyal, and well - organized to infiltrate and set its image on the whole of society. Besides that , many other political streams were flowing in Nicaragua after the Revolution.

The Cult of the New Man

What was the Sandinista ideal of the new man who would make the Nicaraguan revolution?

Among the publications of the FSLN there is a pamphlet entitled ¿Què es un sandinista? *[What is a Sandinist?]* written by the Sandinista Front founders Carlos Fonseca, Òscar Tùrsios and Ricardo Moráles. It contains some brief statements concerning the qualities of the new man, all dating from the early seventies. The purpose in being Sandinista is " to rescue and spread among our people the best qualities and virtues of the revolutionaries who have fought in the ranks of our organization ... to rescue the mystique of the FSLN, that daily attitude of constant sacrifice for our people, of respect

for our leaders and comrades, of fraternity, humility, and simplicity." In the "Prologue" written by Carlos Nuñez we read that the Sandinista is a revolutionary with a great sense of humanity. He is the most dedicated to the just cause of the people, "his generosity is boundless, his interests as an individual are subordinated to the collective interest represented by the vanguard , and his political activity and militancy are guided by political and ideological principles" (2).

T.Borge affirms that "The militants in the new Sandinista party slated to replace the FSLN " must be an example in everything...:*They must have a superior morality to be the sons of Sandino."* Borge is saying that the duty of the revolutionary is to become a new man
(Randal 205).

Elsewhere, Borge affirms that the key to liberation is not economic or political but moral; it consists of liberating oneself from egoism. The fundamental human problem is to overcome alienation from others and self-alienation, a dehumanized condition accentuated by contagion with the "American way of life!" Only by ridding oneself from egoism, according to Borge, is it possible to build a new society. Thus it is not the transformation of the economic infrastructure but the creation of a new man that "in our judgment is the most important aspect of national reconstruction" (Borge 713).

That the creation of the new man was a key to Nicaragua's revolution was brought out in the speeches at the First Conference of Cultural Workers in February 1980. Bayardo Arce, a former leader of the Sandinista Front, in his speech and the article "We are Sandinistas" focused on the question of ideology. The new values should be communicated in such a way that, without sacrificing artistic quality, they could be understood by ordinary workers and peasants: "Whenever the artist sets out to paint, to write a poem, to publish a book, to compose a song, we want him to consider the extent to which his work will be understood by people, the extent to which it will help to transform themselves"
(Rosset and Vandermeer 131-135).

Cultural activity, which "recovers, reproduces, develops, and transmits the values, ideas, and customs of a society," is essentially ideological. In the struggle on the cultural front, Arce insisted, it is imperative to break the ideological power of the bourgeoisie. This requires that obsolete theological beliefs be replaced by a new religious mentality committed to changing the world; and that "disco" music, insipid, frivolous, and syrupy verse, and formal and costly theater be replaced by art having a revolutionary content.

Arce continued, that the most difficult revolution to make and that which takes the longest, , is the cultural revolution. This includes a struggle against the imposition of "Yankee" values and the archaic values remaining from the Spanish conquest. The cosmopolitan values of the slick "jet set,"

expressed through the sophisticated techniques of contemporary music, film, and television, are especially obnoxious. The Nicaraguan people regarded these foreign values as "normal." In their place Arce recommended the diffusion of patriotic and humane values forged in the image of Sandino. He despised the shallow materialism of modern society, rejected egoism and individualism in favor of collective life, but also spurned the remnants of feudal servility and backwardness. Embodied in the figure of Sandino were the new values required to make the ideological revolution in the arts, literature, journalism, and so on.

(*Barricada Internacional.* July 1986: 166)

The objective of the Sandinista cultural revolution was also discussed by the minister of culture, Ernesto Cardenal. Commenting on Marx's eleventh thesis on Feuerbach, Cardenal agreed that "philosophy should have no other task than that of transforming reality," which means that knowledge does not exist for its own sake. Similarly, theology, literature, music, and the arts should have an ultimately practical aim: "I believe that theology also should serve to transform reality. And that poetry should serve to transform reality, and also the theater and every intellectual artistic creation. And that culture exists to transform reality" (Cardenal 165).

The only justification of culture, continued Cardenal, then is to create the new man who will make the revolution. Expressed by almost anybody else, this might be dismissed as propaganda insensitive to both art and the artist. But coming from the leading poet and theologian of the Sandinista revolution, these thoughts are hardly those of a cultural philistine.

Cardenal outlined what he believed to be necessary to make the cultural revolution in Nicaragua. In opposition to the dominant bourgeois values under Anastasio Somoza, the FSLN must develop revolutionary values in education, art, literature, music, history, and the social sciences. The new culture, Cardenal tells in another interview, will stress popular and folk themes that were systematically ignored by artists in the past. The new culture will not subscribe to or diffuse the values of a supercilious and educated elite; it will not be art for art's sake. It will be people's culture not in the sense of a commercialized and vulgar "pop art" but in the sense of prompting authentic human values of the mass media. The new culture will be national instead of cosmopolitan ; it will focus on the nation's history and on the development of the national character ; it will take into account the different geographical regions, races, and languages of Nicaragua. The new culture will be anti-imperialist in rejecting U.S. cultural imports such as "disco", *Star Wars, Dallas, Reader's Digest, Playboy.* It will replace them with folklore and folk art of Nicaragua and the rest of Central America
(Weber 266).

Minister of Culture Ernesto Cardenal revitalized the old concept of the 'proletarian culture' developed by Bogdanov in Revolutionary Russia.
The fundamental objective of *Proletcult* was to create a new class culture, 'proletarian culture.' Starting from the Marxist premise that social existence determines consciousness, *Proletcult* was advocating the policy of the 'clean sweep', seeking to destroy all the values of the past because these were inevitably bourgeois. (Slonim 12- 36).

However, Cardenal, as a poet, valued greatly the 'old culture' of his country and only wanted to adjust some ideas of *Proletkult,* although Cardenal himself never made comments regarding his interest in *Proletkult*

heritage in Russia.

According to *Proletkult*, the same culture cannot serve different interests: bourgeois culture cannot serve the interests of the proletarian regime. Lenin severely criticized *Proletcult* movement and wrote in 1923 in his *"Better Fewer, but Better"* ("Лучше меньше да лучше") :

> " For a start, we should be satisfied with real bourgeois culture; for a start, we should be glad to dispense with the cruder types of pre-bourgeois culture, i.e. , bureaucratic or serf culture, etc "
> (Lenin: 33:487).

But, unlike *Proletkult*, Cardenal planned to "build a bridge" to the new man formation and put in practice Lenin's advice: "For a start, we should be satisfied with real bourgeois culture; for a start, we should be glad to dispense with the cruder types of the pre-bourgeois culture, i.e., bureaucratic or serf culture, etc" (Lenin 34: 453).

According to Lenin, it was necessary to assimilate bourgeois culture first and only then attempt to create socialist culture. If Bogdanov and some other Russian revolutionaries and theorists of culture considered that the ruling class (proletariat) must create a new culture, the Sandinistas believed that socialist culture would be the natural outgrowth of previous cultures. They agreed with Lenin's thought: "Why turn our backs on what is truly beautiful, abandon it as the point of departure for further development solely because it is old?" (Lenin 34 : 439).

Intense conflicts over ideas and approaches are not surprising in the context of a revolution dedicated to transforming the entire realm of thought and being. Socialism was so comprehensive in its goals, yet so fuzzy in its details, and that is why it generated a host of interpretations.

Undoubtedly, this problem is one of the major ones of the post-revolutionary period. The tension between cultural conservatism and political radicalism must be surmounted if the goals of the revolution are to be achieved. People oriented toward the market and private property, religious in their convictions, attached to their families, and highly status conscious or authoritarian in their dealings with others cannot but set cultural limits to socialist programs. However, if politics outstrips by far what the population can accept or absorb, there may be a danger of delegitimation.
How the relationship between culture and politics is resolved, therefore, may have a substantial impact on the outcome of the revolution.

Here an important clue emerges on why communist revolutions generate an aftershock called cultural revolution. Faced with an incongruence between cultural conservatism and political radicalism, leaders attempt to overcome it by initiating a cultural revolution. Soviet analyst V.V. Gorbunov, in his Lenin and Socialist Culture (Ленин и социалистическая культура, 1972) explains that one of the basic features of the transitional period is the cultural revolution "to liquidate the gap between the social-political and the cultural level of development of the country" (128).

Ostensibly, for all Marxists, a cultural revolution is a critical component of the revolutionary process. All revolutions involve a change in the political culture, but only socialist revolution aspires to a change in the culture as a whole. From the Marxist point of view, change cannot be confined to the political level because there is an intricate relationship among politics, economics, and culture.

A cultural revolution, therefore, may be prompted by radical, large-scale visions of a new society at the same time that a program of

cultural change is pressed into service to resolve more immediate problems, such as legitimacy and cultural backwardness. It is up to the political leaders to determine how much weight to accord political radicalism versus cultural conservatism.

In his *"The New Economic Policy and the Tasks of Political Education Departments"*("Новая экономическая политика и задачи политического воспитания департаментов" (1921), Lenin proposed that the solution to the problem of a new dyssynchronization in the postrevolutionary period was adaptation to cultural conservatism. Lenin was keenly aware that in the attempt to institutionalize a new order, the distance between the new socialist elite and the masses, largely peasant, could increase enormously. For this reason, he believed it was particularly important to devise a political approach that would bind the people to the new regime. To Lenin, this binding could be achieved only through a blend of the old and the new. As he stated, in order for the revolution "to be assimilated; we must help the masses of the people to understand it" *(* Lenin *33:73)*. This position, of course, meant a certain deradicalization, or, expressed differently, an acceptance of the cultural limits of revolution.

The pillars of the bridge to the new society would consist of economic development and cultural revolution. Lenin argued more than once that it was essential to begin with what was intelligible and familiar to the large mass of peasants, rather than with something remote and fantastic.

Cultural revolution, hence, was designed to instill the ABC's of knowledge, as well as to develop a work ethic and discipline. It was a massive program of education and modernization, organized to pull the country into the twentieth century. Although new to Russia, the end-product

was meant to be not a radical culture but a modern one. Cultural revolution, as conceived by Lenin, was also an extensive agitation-propaganda campaign to bring about a change in political culture - that is, an acceptance of the values and attitudes associated with the Communist party and Marxist ideology. Although seemingly new, the political culture actually involved a blending of old and new.

The Sandinist propaganda was oriented mostly against the USA and its politics. The task was not only to present the USA as an enemy who wants to destroy the Revolution, but also to blow up the American 'cultural diversion'. One of the major political victories for the FSLN, illustrating its practice during the first phase of the revolution, was the national literacy campaign. Soviet Russia after the October Revolution also sent thousands of volunteers to the countryside in an effort to eradicate illiteracy.
This campaign in Nicaragua had to convince the country that power had changed hands in Nicaragua.

Cardenal: Sandinista Ideologist

How did this Catholic priest (Cardenal) in trouble with church authorities square his religious faith with these revolutionary pronouncements? As he noted in the introduction of his speech "Cultura revolucionaria", (1980) those with a Christian upbringing believe that everything should be subordinate to God. This includes literature, music, and the arts. But authentic Christianity also teaches that God is love-love for others. writes: "Therefore we have to say that everything should be subordinated to the love for man .... Art must be subordinated to the love for man, along with everything else. That is the Revolution" (Cardenal 12). In this latter-day revival of L. Tolstoy's thesis

concerning art and religion we see the confluence of the most powerful movements in Western history, Marxism and Christianity, which Marx believed to be fundamentally antithetical. (Tolstoy 226-227) 9

The new man is publicly equated with Jesus Christ- still the most revered example of love and sacrifice for the world's poor and oppressed. During 1980 Christmas, posters in the Nicaraguan capital celebrated the birth of the new man, were picturing the Christ child in a manger with the Virgin Mary protected by Sandinista armed guards! (Randall 89-108)

As Sergio Ramirez acknowledged in a major address on the first anniversary of the Revolution (19 July 1980), (Randall) Sandinismo and Christianity are two vital and complementary aspects of Nicaraguan life. The moral values of each had become amalgamated in the single revolutionary option aimed at liberating the humiliated, the oppressed, and the exploited. In praise of the Sandinistas who had worked in the Literacy Crusade as militants of the Popular Army of Alphabetization (Ejèrcito Popular de la alfabetizaciòn), Ramirez likened their values to Christian values:

> *You who have gained through the hardships of this struggle the right to be Sandinistas have accomplished this Crusade on the basis of true Christian values that do not contradict Sandinista values: love without limit, humility, the disposition to sacrifice, the preferential option for the poor.... The new man, the new woman, who scorn the accumulation of material goods and see with the clarity that the future, are that way because they are Sandinistas, because they are Christians*
>
> (Ramirez 23).

In Nicaragua the cult of a new man has an independent Christian as well as Marxist origin. The Liberation Theologians extracted from the Epistles of St. Paul the doctrine of a new man in Christ counterpoised to the Adam in all men before Christ. Just as sin entered the world with Adam, so grace and everlasting life were made possible by Christ's expiation of Adam's sin (Romans 5:12-18). We are resurrected or born again in Christ, according to St. Paul, when "our old self has been crucified with Him in order to crush the sinful body and free us from any further slavery to sin" (Romans 6:6). There is a new humanity in accepting Christ as our savior: "There is a new creation whenever a man comes to be in Christ ; what is old is gone, the new has come" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

The principal Marxist source of the cult of a new man is Marx's *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, which preceded his and Engels's scientific socialism. But its immediate inspiration was Che Guevara who, attracted by Sorel's vision of a morally regenerated proletariat, modeled his own humanism on Marx's prescientific works. In his essay "Socialism and Man in Cuba," Guevara claims that the authentic revolutionary is guided by strong feelings of love, that love for the people is a sacred cause, that to this strong dose of fellow feeling is added an equally strong sense of justice. That there should be ties of friendship only with comrades completely dedicated to the revolution, that there must be no life for him outside the revolution, that there is no sacrifice too great to make for the people, and that sacrifices must be made on a continual and daily basis. The objective of this

moral code was to fashion the revolutionary vanguard. "The human personality plays the role of mobilization and direction insofar as it incarnates the highest virtues and aspirations of the people"
(Guevara 382).[10]

Guevara's essay aimed at making every Cuban a revolutionary. He began by idealizing the guerrilla or freedom fighter as the prototype of the new man, and then the Communist party militant as the builder of a new society. The end of the revolutionary process is the cultivation of the new person, of a just and fraternal society inspired by Jesus Christ.

How it began

In April 1954 the young poet Ernesto Cardenal took part in a failed conspiracy to overthrow his country's dictator Anastasio Somoza. His friend Baez Bone was killed in the conspiracy and Ernesto , who had to go underground, wrote an epitaph for him:

Creyeron que te enterraban
y lo que hacian era enterrar una semilla.

They thought they had buried
you and what they did was bury
a seed

(*Poesìa Revolucionaria Nicaragüense* 75. Translation H.G.).

Two years later in 1956 the poet Rigoberto Lòpez Pèrez did succeed in killing A. Somoza. His last letter to his mother was cut up into lines and published as a poem by Carlos Fonseca, the founder of the Sandinista Front.

Although my comrades
don't want to accept it

I have decided to try to be
the one
who initiates
the beginning of the end
of this tyranny...
I hope you will
take all these calmly
and think what I have done
is a duty any Nicaraguan
who really
loves their country
should have performed
a long time ago
(Katabasis 142).

In 1961 Carlos Fonseca, Tomas Borge and Silvío Mayorga founded the Sandinista Front, to liberate their country still under the dictatorship of another Somoza, Luis. Carlos was killed fighting in 1976. Reflecting about his future and possible death, Tomas Borge wrote poetry in prison. Here is part of his 'Letter to Ana Josefina', addressed to his daughter on her second birthday.

I don't known if I'll die
when the cocks crow
this coming winter.

But if my hands grow cold
and any my eyes lose
their teasing gleam
their tenderness
I shall live on.
I shall go on
if you are generous
if in your heart
egoism finds no room
and with your sweetness and your rage
you stand against injustices
(Borge 44).

While he was in prison Tomas threatened his guards and torturers with revenge when the Sandinistas triumphed. His words were turned into a song by Carlos Mejia's brother Luis Enrique, popular Nicaraguan singer and composer.

My personal revenge will be your children's
right to schooling and to flowers...
My personal revenge will be to offer
these hands you once ill-treated
with all their tenderness intact.

(Mejia - Godoy : a song "Mi venganza personal" [My Personal Revenge])
After the Revolution, Tomas became Minister of the Interior and got his revenge. He personally sought out his torturers and forgave them.

Tenderness is a constant theme in Sandinista poetry, which spills over into their revolutionary ideology. Another leader, Ricardo Morales, who was killed at Nandaime in 1973, wrote this love poem to his fellow militant and *compañera* Doris Tijerino. In Ricardo's poem he and she are so close that they are 'one life' and their tenderness for each other is indistinguishable from their common dedication to the Revolution. For him she is:

"you who are mortal but resist like the wind's resistent backbone..."

and the poem concludes:

There is so much of your arms
so much of your face
so much of your tenderness
as the substance of the universe
and so much of my blood through your skin
so much of your breath
caught in my trembling
and so much history
and so much more
that we are two forms
and it is one life

and everywhere there you are

and the struggle continues

(Morales Avilès 14).

In 1969, the twenty-year -old poet Leonel Rugama had decided to leave the seminary where he was training for the priesthood and join the Sandinista urban guerrillas in Managua. He wrote a famous poem entitled 'The Earth is a Satellite of the Moon':

The Apollo 2 cost more than Apollo 1.

Apollo 1 cost enough.

Apollo 3 cost more than Apollo 2.

Apollo 2 cost more than Apollo 1.

Apollo 1 cost enough...

The great grandparents of the Acahualinca people

were less hungry than the grandparents.

The great grandparents died of hunger.

The grandparents of the Acahualinca people

were less hungry than the fathers.

The grandparents died of hunger...

The children of the Acahualinca people

are not born for hunger

and they are hungry to be born

in order to die of hunger.

Blessed are the poor

because theirs shall be the moon

(Rugama 64).

In his "Oracle concerning Managua" Ernesto Cardenal gives a dramatic account of Leonel's heroic death defending a safe house in Managua against besieging troops, tanks and helicopters. Later, Cardenal's poem 'Final Offensive' described the Sandinista victory with an acknowledgment to Leonel:

It was like a trip to the moon

with all its precise and complicated details...

The moon was the earth. Our bit of earth.

And we got there.

And now Rugama,

it's beginning to belong to the poor; the earth is (with its moon)

(Cardenal 18).

The poet Gioconda Belli describes Nicaragua as a heroic fighter.

... the girl who sways her body provokes

winks sells tamales sells paintings

does her bit in the militia

goes to the park invents love

sets the flame trees alight

flirts playing hide and seek

walks out among fixed bayonets

makes circus makes holiday praise

and believes in living and dying
brandishes her fiery sword
to ensure the only choice for anyone
is heaven on earth
or ashes
a free country
or death
(Belli 70).

Many Sandinista guerrillas were women. The poet Daisy Zamora ran the clandestine Radio Sandino and described her encounter with Ernesto Cardenal:

If I had known Ernesto as he appears
in a yellowing photo Julio showed me,
thin, bearded, check shirt, linen trousers,
hands in his pockets
and a general air of helplessness,
I would have joined the April Rebellion for him...
After the 1978 insurrection
at last he came to me.
He appeared in the clandestine Radio Sandino
wanting to meet me because he had heard
I was a poet and combatant...

He arrived quietly, with no fuss
walking through the rainy mountain.
He came into the booth and asked for me
(Zamora 36).

Following the Revolution Cardenal became Minister of Culture and D. Zamora Vice - Minister. After becoming a Catholic priest in 1965 Cardenal had established a peasant community on Solentiname, a group of islands on Lake Nicaragua in which the first poetry workshop was set up in 1976. The peasants, some previously illiterate, produced some remarkable poems. They became increasingly involved with the Sandinistas and all the young men and women in the poetry workshop took part in the Assault on San Carlos in October 1977. In a characteristic oxymoron, Carlos Mejia's song about the assault describes them as 'armed to the teeth with tenderness'. Felipe Peña, killed in May 1979, addresses a disgruntled girlfriend.

you think I am not in love
and you think I am sod
because I act as if I don't get
the meaning of your words
your tone of voice, your wicked looks.
Possibly you doubt your beauty
because I don't seem to make much of it.
I don't want you to think of me like that.
Please reflect. Consider

what can a guerrilla offer you

squelching in mud

along mountain paths...

(Wright 82)

When Ernesto Cardenal became Minister of Culture in 1979, the Solentiname workshop became the model for the poetry workshops he set up all over the country: in small towns, army barracks, police stations and so on. He issued some guidelines for writing poems which began:

"Writing good poetry is easy and the rules for doing it are few and simple."

"The guidelines caution against thumping rhymes and metros; they recommend the use of particular rather than general terms: 'iguana ' rather than just 'animal', 'flame-tree' rather than just 'tree' (Paulin 132). Poetry, according to Cardenal has an added appeal if it includes proper names "of people, rivers, towns etc. Rather than being based on ideas poetry should be based on things which reach us through our senses. We should write as we speak with the natural plainness of the spoken language, not the written language. Avoid clichés or hackneyed expressions. Try to condense the language as much as possible; all words which are not absolutely necessary should be left out (Paulin 133). Cardenal's name for the kind of poetry he is recommending is 'exteriorist' . Within eight months of the Sandinista triumph a massive literacy campaign was mounted, (run by Ernesto's brother Fernando Cardenal) ,which reduced illiteracy from over 50% to under 13% and won a UNESCO prize. Poetry was one important part of the campaign.

The literacy teachers, mainly young student volunteers, known as *brigadistas* wrote many poems (subsequently published in an anthology by the Ministry of Culture) and used poetry in their teaching. The Ministry published the poetry magazine *Poesìa Libre*, containing poems by well known Nicaraguans, translations from many languages and a regular section of Nicaraguan workshop poetry. These magazines were sold cheaply in supermarkets and many other outlets. During the 1980s the Editorial Nueva Nicaragua regularly published books on poetry in editions of 6.000 copies and often much larger. The Soviet Union and Cuba also flooded the market with cheap books. There were many children's books, classics, textbooks, books on science and politics, literary criticism, and philosophy.

The prominence given to poetry had important effects on the Nicaraguan Revolution. Like land, culture- both past and present -was 'redistributed' to its rightful owners, the people. And as with the land, those who possess it can both produce and enjoy its bounty. People not only learned to read in order to 'consume' poetry but also to produce it in large quantities. Obviously the quality varied considerably, but even producers of ordinary and short poems benefited from an enormous growth in self - respect through this act of 'speaking for themselves'. As the seven- year-old Solentiname poet Juan Agudelo writes:

> I am happy because I have my parents.
>
> I am happy because I can read.
>
> I am happy because I am a poet
>
> (Katabasis 33).

Pre-revolutionary architectural and literary monuments were preserved with the exception of all those which related to the hated Somoza. Dozens of different monuments of Somoza's clan were destroyed. Since Nicaragua was a very religious country, the Sandinist regime could not openly propagate atheism. However, the overwhelming majority of Sandinistas did not participate in religious ceremonies.

The official propaganda's attitude toward the USA was extremely negative. However, the American consumer culture was valued by a vast majority of the population. The country was flooded with old American movies and music. Following the revolution, it was felt that this cultural hollowness should be replaced with a new culture. The country did not have the resources to set its own standard in a short period of time, particularly when the internal war against the "contras" , armed and supported by the USA, was at its height. The leftist tendencies inside of the Frente predominated and the Sandinistas' isolation from the rest of the world created a specific environment. Soviet and Cuban aid to the Sandinist Revolution gradually drove the country into a tight corner. Within this context, Soviet values conquered new cultural ground in Nicaragua.

Culture and Revolution

Another important role for poetry was its epic function - its ability to tell the story of the Revolution with its heroes and martyrs again and again so that this story became part of the fabric of Nicaragua's collective consciousness. The inspirational and mortifying force of these poems was no small factor in enabling the Sandinists to withstand for eleven years the force and horror of US determination to destroy their revolution. The brothers Carlos and Luis Enrique Mejia Godoy wrote the *Canto Epico to the FSLN*: a song cycle telling the story of the revolution which was initially sung and broadcast clandestinely, but later became well known by all. When Sandinista heroes were buried, their names were read out and all the people respond 'Presente!' as in a roll call, meaning that the dead are still present as long as their memory and the Revolution they died for still lives. The chorus verse of Carlos Mejia's song "Comandante Carlos" ends: 'All Nicaragua proclaims you: ¡Presente!' And here indeed the words are not merely referential but performative: the act of singing the song *keeps* the hero present (Paulin 122).

Julio Valle Castillo had written a set of poems amounting to a Sandinista martyrology which can also amuse his readers, as in the poem comparing a baby nephew's progress to the revolution's:

> No sooner born than he shouts and screams
> clenching his fists like little contact bombs.
> For the Final Offensive he became expert

at shooting under beds with his mother,
retreating to Doña Ermida's breast-
a granny at last -or nights beneath
rockets and mortar shells.
Fat and ugly the awful child,
pretty as a Sherman tank
just captured from the Guard,
advanced snatching sunlit days from death.
The Revolution and he began to look better
handsome the pair of them,
but my nephew got a nasty bout of measles.
Let's hope the Revolution won't catch anything ...
We are besotted with her,
giving her all her medicines at the right time
(Valle Castillo 66).

The lines from poems quoted above are a very small sample of work from a population of little more than four million, where many of those involved in the revolution wrote poetry, met, fell in love, and composed poems about each other, all contributing to a tightly interwoven sense of belonging rich in poetry. A surprising amount of the poetry is in fact love poetry. As Daniel Ortega puts it (in a poem written in prison in the 1960s):

Moon! Lilies! God,
these are political poets!
(Cardenal 76)

This poem, which gives a very strong sense of the dislocation and near -madness induced by long imprisonment and torture, ends laconically:

We missed Managua

in mini skirts

(Cardenal 76).

One of the fruits of revolution in Nicaragua was the emergence of several fine women poets, among them Gioconda Belli. During the decade of insurrection preceding the Sandinista triumph in 1979, Belli wrote award-winning feminist and revolutionary poetry. Although she dedicated herself to writing poetry for nearly two decades - she published five collections between 1974 and 1991- in the late 1980s. Belli turned her poetic sensibility to the novel. Since then, she has published two successful novels and is presently completing a third . Belli's unusual success as a poet and her transition to novelist can best be understood within the context of recent political events in Nicaragua.

Thematically, Belli's poetry shares many characteristics with the work of other contemporary Nicaraguan female poets. According to the poet Daisy Zamora, in the introduction to her anthology La mujer nicaragüense en la poesìa 1992 [The Nicaraguan Woman in Poetry], these "poets exalt the human body, celebrate sensuality and sexuality, and glorify social protest and revolution." Zamora also calls attention to the testimonial nature of many of the poems by Nicaraguan women poets , reflected in the use of the first person.

The poems of Belli's first collection, Sobre la grama, [On the Grass], explore the marvels of the female body, maternity, and sexual desire. Miriam Ellis of the University of California (Santa Cruz) believes that "despite the preponderance of love poems in *Sobre la grama*, Belli does not wallow in sentimentality but rather imbues her lyrical statements with a strong sense of self. The pieces to her young daughters [Margam and Melissa] are exceptionally tender, documenting their birth and early years and her sense of joy and fulfillment, as well as the realistic demands of motherhood. She exults in being a woman: 'Y Dios me hizo mujer' [And God Made Me a Woman], the leading piece in the anthology, which later, with 'Tengo,'a shorter work, constitute an extraordinary statement about the female condition.

In a " Postscript" to the second edition (1983) of *Sobre la grama* Nicaraguan poet Coronel Urtecho declared that the outstanding event in Nicaragua's history had occurred: La Revoluciòn Popular Sandinista, and that Gioconda Belli's book of poems was a sort of harbinger of the revolution. Urtecho wrote: "Her unique poetry is certainly one of the most beautiful and natural voices of Nicaraguan revolution ... Reading Belli once more, as I usually so do, I feel like comparing her, or rather placing her on a level, not only with the best contemporary poets but with all the great women poets that have existed since Sappho."

In poems such as "Menstruaciòn" [Menstruation] , " Maternidad II" [Maternity II] and "Parto" [Childbirth], the poet celebrates the nature of her

womanhood. Through her intimist approach, Belli reveals the extraordinary aspects of the ordinary. In 1978, she addresses the revolutionary struggle in her second book , Linea de fuego, [Line of Fire], which she dedicated to her friends of the Sandinista National Liberation Front. This collection of poems won the prestigious Casa de las Americas Prize. *Linea de Fuego* has 55 poems, reflecting revolutionary fervor as well as frank expressions of sexual desire and fulfillment, and eight prose poems. En poems like " Hasta que seamos libres" [Until We are Free], "Seremos nuevos" [We Shall Be New], and " Amo a los hombres y les canto" [I love Men and Sing of Them], she praises and idealizes the revolutionary struggle and announceds the advent of a new country of free men and women. Her third and fourth books of poetry, "Truenos y arco iris, [1982[Thunder and Rainbow], and "De la costilla de Eva", [1986[From Eve's Rib], consist of poems written after the triumph of the Revolution during the period of national reconstruction and the Contra War. Although Belli continues to write very intimate poems, she focuses here on the tasks of protecting the Revolution and constructing a new society. Her fifth book of poetry, El ojo de la mujer, [1991 [Woman's Eye]], is an anthology of her previous books and other poems written between 1976 and 1991. Jose´ Coronel Urtecho, one of Nicaragua' s finest poets of this century, praised Belli's poetry with the following words: "Those who read this book of poems by Gioconda Belli and do not achieve an immediate knowledge, the direct experience of what poetry is, should give up all hope - lasciate ogni speranza- [leave only hope] of ever knowing it" (Urtecho xi).

Since the late 1980s, Belli has dedicated herself almost exclusively to the novel and has written little poetry. Her transition from poet to novelist is somewhat of an anomaly in Nicaragua, a country which since the time of Rubèn Darìo had produced many fine poets. Although Nicaragua has been known principally as "a land of poets," many novels have been written by Nicaraguans. However, as a genre the novel has been undervalued and had received little critical attention. In addition, Nicaragua has had few women novelists.

Therefore, Belli's commitment to this genre was an important development in contemporary literature in Nicaragua where many of Nicaraguan poets speak of their links to Darìo. His work is at the very root of a poetic experience of the country. Josè Coronel Urtecho and Ernesto Cardenal discovered and translated North American poetry (Ezra Pound, William Williams, Dave Dickinson) in the fifties, and the anthology that resulted from their collaboration was important both to them and to the poets who came after them. Among the living poets, Cardenal has without a doubt exercised the greatest influence. His open, conversational style (which he has called *exteriorismo*, the voice of the everyday, of the real objects around us) has had an impact upon many of Nicaraguan poets.

Perhaps the most interesting development in Nicaraguan literature and one which received a conscious boost from the revolution, has been the attention to oral history, the testimony of life in the words of those who live it, in poetry as well as in prose. In many ways this is an extension of

Cardenal's *exteriotismo*, where people's voices are always a strong presence. But it also comes from the tremendous shared experience of clandestine life and war. Extraordinary emotions and deeds become one's daily reality. Already there are memoirs and diaries by some of the combatants. (T.Borge's *Carlos, Down Is No Longer Beyond Our reach* and O. Cabezas's *The Mountain Is More than Just a Great Expanse of Green* are the most important examples.)

From the beginning, the Sandinistas were emphatically clear about the need for absolute artistic freedom in the new Nicaragua. The usual discussions took place, in which those favoring some form of socialist realism tangled with those intent on preserving a broader concept of the creative field. The results of these open polemics simply served to strengthen the Nicaraguan conviction that "the role of the writer in the revolution is first of all, in Tomas Borge's words, "to write well... We cannot put all these human creative possibilities inside a narrow circle in the name of a temporal slogan. It would be like trapping them in the circles of hell... Writers must be allowed to grow their own wings so they can fly to whatever heights they please" (Borge 23).

This is, of course, Tomas Borge speaking more as a political leader than as a writer. As a political leader he is concerned with the role of writers vis-à-vis the political process. Perhaps in this respect works of men and women whose primary activity is writing are more to the point.

The Nicaraguan Revolution provided much more than simply a context for the expression of these ideas. In spite of more urgent

socio-political priorities, the new state placed strategic importance on, and gave great resources to, cultural work. The overwhelming majority of Nicaraguan writers fought for this revolution, believed in it, and understood that it was only through its consolidation that they could really achieve the freedom and peace of mind necessary to sustained creativity.

However, this situation made for some obvious contradictions. The political ideology institutions of the revolution saw cultural activity and creativity as *necessary* to the task of preserving authentic tradition and values as well as to the people's growth and to the reversal of an oppressive value system. The revolution was *conceived* to include popular participation in cultural expression (ranging from the support given to established artists to programs aimed at those such - peasants, workers, students, housewives, children, and soldiers who simply feel the need to articulate their creativity). The priority tasks were so consuming at this point that there was, first of all, *little physical time in which to work.*

The purpose of art in a revolutionary situation is to propagate the new ideas, ideals, and values. Art helps to identify the class enemy and fight against him. Poetry, mural painting, and revolutionary songs were among the most important arts forms . In revolutionary Nicaragua, all these genres were widely introduced and received the national support.

The Religious Policy of the FSLN

In a major interview with the editor of the Mexican weekly *Proceso* in November 1980, Borge was asked, "What is the gravest threat to the Revolution?" He replied that it was not President Reagan but the "mistake of those who would have the world believe that this revolution is communist and atheist." In a Christian country , he observed, it would be foolish to ignore history. Yet the Sandinista leaders and a large number of intermediate cadres were atheists. Despite the Sandinista leaders' atheism, they were staunch defenders of religious freedom:

> But who is it that permits religious freedom here? Isn't it us? [Sandinista leaders] There are many more religious schools here than in the time of Somocismo. Who led the literacy campaign? A priest. Who is responsible for Nicaraguan culture? A priest (Marcus 125).

And if that were not enough, Jaime Wheelock added: "This is a government of Christian and revolutionary principles, a government oriented by Christians. So there is no contradiction [between atheism and Christianity], because the Christians are also in power!

(Marcus 128)

Among contemporary revolutions led by Marxist-Leninist vanguards, the one in Nicaragua is unique in involving the massive participation of Christians.

Even Carlos Fonseca admitted that Sandino and the FSLN were both following in Christ's footsteps.

The FSLN encouraged the new Christianity by officially recognizing that the people could be both Christian and revolutionaries, thus breaking with a tradition going back to Marx.

The FSLN's informal policy toward religion was to support actively what Borge called the "church of the poor." "Everyone knows that there are two churches.... The other church is tied to the past; it is the church of the rich. This is not something new, because Christ also ... found that there were two churches...: the church of the temple, and his own church of fishermen and humble people" (Marcus 162). The FSLN had no support for traditional Catholics who supported Somoza's genocidal regime.

Unlike the official communist position regarding religion and revolution, whereby religion was rejected as an opiate of the masses, the general attitude and policy toward religion in Nicaragua were positive. The FSLN believed that religion might become an impulse to revolution. Many Russian intellectuals, including A. Blok, shared the same view.

In conclusion, it should be said that Sandinists had made two significant contributions to the ideology of the Nicaraguan Revolution: first, the development of a unique theology of liberation which drew upon the Scriptures emphases on humanity's collective rather than personal existence; second, the adaptation of this theology to the Marxist class struggle. Together they provide a religious justification for the Nicaraguan Revolution for those

Sandinistas who were both Christians and Marxists. Many intellectuals in Russia also dreamed of this link between Christian philosophy and Revolution. However, Russia's way into socialism was very different. The FSLN's policy was to tolerate ideological diversity even when some ideologies were hostile to the FSLN. Unlike Marxism, Sandinismo thrived on moral faith. The patriotic and national values defended by the FSLN were far from being purely instrumental. In its folkloric dimension, Sandinismo was an expression of moral rather than economic interests.

Assassinated by Somoza, the former director of the newspaper *La Prensa*, Pedro Joaquin Chamorro said:

> *There is a great difference between the Communist Fidel Castro who in his false battle for the independence of his country has filled it with Russian rockets, soldiers, planes and even canned goods, and a Sandino who defended the sovereignty of his ground with homemade bombs but without accepting* the *patronage of another power* (Kirkpatrick 122).

A salient difference between the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutions is that in Nicaragua this anarcho-communism enjoyed the backing of the new Christianity and its theology of liberation.

Conclusion

Winds of renewal and radical change swept all areas of Russian culture during the turbulent years between 1905 and 1930. Never before the social, political, and cultural lives undergone such drastic transformation.

All artistic forces were involved. Even writers who tried to remain aloof from social and political issues were inevitably touched by the Revolution. It is therefore impossible to understand the poetics outside the political contest. In 1917 some of the leading poets - Bely, Blok, and Mayakovsky among them enthusiastically welkomed the revolution. Gradually and under the Stalinist pressure the nascent Soviet state became intolerant toward any manifestation of artistic independence. The death of V. Mayakovsky in 1930 marked the demise of the literary avant- garde in Russia and coincided with the imposition of the Stalinist dictatorship in all spheres of intellectual life. The brief flowering of Russian poetry came to an end.

Another revolution which swept old regime and opened the door to the creation of the "new" was Nicaraguan Sandinista revolution. When we analyze the Sandinista program and objectives, we certainly confirm that the Frente Sandinista de la Liberaciòn Nacional (FSLN's) objectives were democratic: overthrow of the tyrant, instalation of a provisional government representative of all social classes, creation of a people's culture in place of the eletis, formulation of an independent and nonaligned foreign policy, and application of a program of economic reconstrution. The presented above evidences show that under the tight influence of Marxism, Sandinismo represented a unique blend of Nicaraguan nationalism and the contributions of revolutionary movements of other countries. It was unique and had its own way to the future. The hybrid of Marxism and Christianity served singular purpose of breaking down the barriers that had traditionally separated Marxists from Christians.

Footnotes

1 The poem 'The Coming Huns' was translated by Jon Stallworthy and Peter Franz and published in *The Twelve and other poems,* London, 1970.
2 See Renato Poglioli, *The Phoenix and the Spider* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1957).
3 Translated by Boris Thomson and published in *The Permanent Revolution.* Oxford Press, 1977.
4 See *The Soviet Heretic: Essays* translated and edited by Mirra Ginsburg. (Chicago 1970).
5 From *Mayakovsky and His Poetry* by H. Marshal, New York , Hill & Wang, 1965.
6 The passages of the A.Blok's article "Intelligentsiya and Revolution" were translated by B. Thomson in *The Permanent Revolution. Oxford Press, 1977.*
7 All Soviet critics unanimously rank A. Blok's early poetic reaction to the Revolution as sincere and truly "revolutionary". Blok's "Twelve" was his reaction to the Revolution. He knew about French Revolution and its effects in Europe. The spirit of the renovation and ' fresh air' were necessary for Russia. A. Blok's symbolistic soul needed 'cosmic' way out from the deadlock in which Russia was after the war with Japan. Many Russian intelligentsia welcomed the Revolution as the response to the 'deadlock'.

Sergei Hackel's understanding of "The Twelve" is perhaps the most realistic and acceptable. The Revolution and Christianity are two basic starting points. The old world was unable to offer harmony and happiness, peace and prosperity to the nation. Christ as for ancient world of Israel , again lead but now Russia which has a very special mission of purging the

road for the future. As many Russian intelligents, (Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, and others) Blok also believed that religion was that purifying force which finally would convert the cherished hope into reality. The Revolution was the way for *external* liberation. Ivanov- Razumnik wrote:

> *"The Twelve" is a poem about revolutionary Petersburg at the end of 1917 and the beginning of 1918. It is a poem about blood, dirt, crime, and the fall of man, but that is on one level. On the other level it is a poem about the eternal universal truth of the Revolution, about how the new good tidings of the liberation of man come into the world through these blood-stained people. For were not the twelve apostles also murderers and sinners?*

According to the fifth chapter of the *Acts of the Apostles* Ananias and his wife Sappira decided to cheat and keep some money for themselves. However, Peter said" Why you lied to the Holy Spirit?
You didn't lie to people. You lied to God!"

As soon as Ananias heard this, he dropped dead and his wife also. In the poem, one of the twelve guards, Peter (coincidence?)
killed the prostitute who was "tempted by the material goods offered by counterrevolutionaries". Blok uses this parallel with the Gospels to show Bolshevik "justice" does not contradict Christian teaching. The twelve guards are the unconscious instruments of a higher truth. They embody the instinctive "Godbearing" ("Богоносящий") rightness of the people and, although in words they are really led by Jesus Christ, because they are completing His

revolution. This idea of a higher truth temporarily obscured by the ugliness of everyday reality, they belief that there can be an ultimate, hiddengood that is unwittingly served by evil means - at least as expressed in Block's poem and in Hackel's exegesis of it - was the most sophisticated of the early intellectual attitudes to the Revolution.

8 Augusto Cèsar Sandino is Nicaraguan national hero who started the war (1925) against the USA. He opposed to foreign intervention and refused to accept a United States - imposed 'solution'. He drew the Americans into the first antiguerrilla war they had to face in Latin America.

9 For Tolstoy the only good art and the only art that is not is fake art is Christian art, that which unites people and is based on love. See Leo Tolstoy, *What is Art?* Translated by Aylmer Maude. London: Oxford University Press, 1950.

10 Ernesto "Che" Guevara . Argentinean born Cuban revolutionary. Dedicated his life to overthrowing Cuban dictator F. Batista. Was killed in Bolivia where planned to rise the guerrilla movement.

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